

Journalist

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The Guardian

INTERNATIONAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

46.676

The Week

The Romeo and Juliet Mafia wedding

The Week, page 17



Catching up with yuppie flu

Martin Jacques: how I conquered ME

The Week, page 13

Rachel Cusk on plastic surgery

The ugly truth of man-made beauty

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Document shows senior Tories conspired to prevent full airing of Hamilton case

A perversion of Parliament

Letter details 'extreme anxiety'

Paul Johnson

THE editor of the Guardian, Alan Rusbridger, last night wrote to John Major, Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown, to express the paper's extreme anxiety over the way the Neil Hamilton-Greer cash for questions affair will be investigated.

Enclosed in the letters sent to the party leaders — and to the Speaker of the House of Commons, Betty Boothroyd — are copies of a document obtained by the newspaper as it built up its defence to the libel action mounted by the disgraced former minister and the lobbyist. The pair abandoned their action, paying part of the paper's costs, earlier this week.

The Guardian believes the document shows how the Conservative Party has, through senior party and government members, using the mechanisms of Parliament, conspired to prevent a full and public airing of the facts about the behaviour of Mr Hamilton and Mr Greer.

The Guardian cannot publish this document because it came to the newspaper under subpoena from the Government's own records handed over by the Treasury Solicitor.

"This is evidence of the cover-up we always suspected. It shows that the Government's first instinct when dealing with this affair was to stifle it," Mr Rusbridger said last night. "It shows the contempt with which the Government was prepared to treat parliamentary law. It was a conspiracy to pervert the course of justice in Westminster."

After receiving the Guardian letter, Mr Ashdown said last night: "This extraordinary and shocking document raises the gravest concerns about the integrity of the Government and the extent to which it is prepared to pervert the procedures of the House of Commons and its committees for its own purposes."

Three actions are now necessary to restore confidence in the House of Commons' capacity effectively to investi-



Tony Blair, John Major and Paddy Ashdown, to whom the Guardian wrote last night. Mr Ashdown said the document the newspaper enclosed 'raises the gravest concerns about the integrity of the Government'

This extraordinary and shocking document raises the gravest concerns about the integrity of the Government and the extent to which it is prepared to pervert the procedures of the House of Commons and its committees for its own purposes **Paddy Ashdown yesterday**

gate the implications of the Hamilton affair and to regulate the conduct of MPs.

"One: the Prime Minister should authorise full publication of all the documents in the Hamilton case forthwith by placing them in the library of the House of Commons.

"Two: the Prime Minister should now make an immediate statement of clarification.

"Three: the House of Commons should consider as a matter of urgency whether this matter should be submitted to a tribunal of inquiry under the Tribunals and Inquiries Act of 1971."

Mr Major has said that the Parliamentary Commissioner

for Standards, Sir Gordon Downey, must have all the documents and evidence material to the case so as to carry out his examination. His conclusions, however, will go in secret to the Commons Privileges and Standards Committee. This body, with its built-in Conservative majority will decide whether to publish Sir Gordon's report and a transcript of the committee's subsequent hearings.

A prominent member of the committee is the Tory grandee, Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith. He chaired the Members' Interests Committee when it carried out a previous investigation into allega-

tions by the Guardian about Mr Hamilton's behaviour. The inquiry recommended no action and was so limited in scope that the Labour minority walked out in protest.

Sir Gordon has said: "It will be up to the committee to decide what to do with it (this report). They could either accept it, reject it, or decide to do their own inquiry."

Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, stuck last night to the government line that the Downey inquiry should not be prejudged. Questioned on C4 news about how Mr Hamilton had taken money and had lied about his conduct, Mr Heseltine said:

"This matter is being considered by Sir Gordon Downey. It's absolutely right this process should proceed.

"It would be wrong for you, me, or anyone else to get involved. It's wrong for us to rush for judgments simply because there has been a whole range of speculation."

Earlier, Brian Mawhinney, the Conservative Party chairman, interviewed on BBC radio, described Mr Hamilton as a "hardworking and conscientious member of Parliament."

Pressed further on whether he backed the MP who has admitted this week to taking £10,000 from Mr Greer, Mr

Mawhinney replied: "As we speak, he certainly has my support."

Asked whether, if Sir Gordon found against Mr Hamilton, he would no longer have that support, the Tory chairman replied: "I would not prejudge the inquiry."

John Prescott, deputy Labour leader, turned on Mr Hamilton in his speech to the party conference yesterday, saying: "John Major cannot afford to lose him can he? Why? Because this man is his parliamentary majority of one. He is John Major's immoral majority of one."

Comment

The real issue is justice

WE OWE readers an explanation today about the story on this page. Of the many disturbing documents disclosed to the Guardian during the course of fighting the libel trial brought by Neil Hamilton and Ian Greer there was one in particular which struck at the heart of Government. It was not to do with Ritz bills, cash in brown envelopes, backhanders or compromising sums slipped into campaign fighting funds. It was to do with the very processes which supposedly ensure the integrity of Parliament itself.

We cannot publish the document today. The rules of the court require that documents not used in a trial — and there was no trial due to the cave-in by Mr Hamilton and

Mr Greer — must be returned to the Government and kept secret. That placed us in a dilemma, not least because Mr Hamilton has now sought to have his case once more heard under the very procedures which we believe to have been polluted. Our response has been to send this document — together with a letter of explanation — to the four Privy Counsellors most able to ensure the integrity of Parliament. Accordingly, the document was sent last night to the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Liberal Democrats and the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Politicians are immune from the ordinary processes of the law for bribery and corruption. That is because, in theory, they are punished for these offences by parliamentary committees. Parliament is thus a court: it is, indeed, called the High Court of Parliament because it is the highest court in the land. It is a perversion of justice to attempt to influence the outcome of any court, whether it be Parliament or a humble magistrates court. The most junior court clerk and solicitor know that. The evidence obtained by the Guardian shows that senior members of this Government don't.

The document shows a conspiracy to engineer a cover-up. There appears to have been a willingness to subvert for party political processes the very procedures which are

designed to ensure the proper standards of rectitude in public life and which are now to be used again in the further investigations into Mr Hamilton.

We have utter faith in the integrity of Sir Gordon Downey, the man charged with examining the facts in the Hamilton case. But his powers to call for witnesses and evidence are subject to the decision of the Conservative-dominated Privileges and Standards Committee which he serves; and that majority would be able accordingly to control, or at the very least influence to a material degree, the scope and rigour of his investigation.

Moreover, it is the committee, not Sir Gordon, which determines not only the outcome of the inquiry, but also whether the report should be published or kept secret.

Mr Major now has to consider two things. He must investigate the state of affairs revealed by this document. And he must urgently take steps to reassure the public that the forthcoming investigation into Mr Hamilton is — and is seen to be — beyond the reach of party political interference. It is our view that only an inquiry under the Tribunals and Inquiries Act of 1971 can at this stage rescue the procedure from the grave doubts which must now surround it.

That is our explanation to our readers today. We await with interest Mr Major's explanation.

Inside

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The father of one of the children murdered at Dunblane is planning to sue the Government for negligence.

World News
France is planning to clamp down on mail-order wholesalers selling prescription medicines on the Internet.

Finance
A senior fund manager claimed he was sacked after complaining about the ethics of a leading city firm.

Sport
A court decision to allow Rupert Murdoch's Super League to operate freely in Australia will have worldwide repercussions.

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THE TANGLED WED:

Concern on standards intensified despite inquiries

Search for the truth that lost its way

David Hencke, David Pallister and Jamie Wilson

IN THE present atmosphere there is disquiet about public standards.

John Major told the House of Commons, and I have concluded that action is imperative.

That was almost two years ago when the Prime Minister, battered by allegations of sleaze within his party, decided to set up the Nolan Committee to investigate standards in public life.

The dramatic announcement on October 25 1994 came five days after the Guardian first published its allegations that two junior ministers, Tim Smith and Neil Hamilton, had received cash for asking questions on behalf of the Harrods owner, Mohammed Al Fayed.

Lord Nolan set about his task with enthusiasm. His report laid down seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

It proposed that members should not accept paid parliamentary work for lobbyists. In a constitutional innovation, much resented by the majority of Tory MPs, it also suggested that MPs' behaviour be subject to independent inquiry.

But in the committee corridor of the Commons the Select Committee of Members' Interests was arguing over whether Neil Hamilton should have disclosed his six-day stay at the Paris Ritz.

Parliament's inquiry into Neil Hamilton's stay in the Ritz Hotel and the cash for questions payments began on November 22, 1994. It was to be heard by the Commons Members' Interests Committee, chaired by veteran Tory grandee, Sir Geoffrey Johnson-Smith, and with an in-built Tory majority of one.

The committee's remit then was to look into breaches of parliamentary rules by MPs not declaring benefits and paid work in the Register of Members' Interests.

Before the committee was a complaint from Alex Carlisle,

the Liberal Democrat MP for Montgomery, based on the Guardian's story a month earlier about Mr Hamilton's undeclared stay at the Ritz and allegations that he had received cash and Harrods shopping vouchers from Mohammed Al Fayed.

That first meeting led to a row between Labour and the Tories over the appointment of Andrew Mitchell, a government whip, Mr Mitchell was the first government whip to sit on the committee, which deals exclusively with parliamentary, as opposed to government, business.

The MP for Gedling had been appointed in June at the time the Guardian had raised questions about Jonathan Aitken's Ritz hotel bill.

At the meeting, Mr Mitchell, according to MPs present, distinguished himself by forcibly arguing that there was no need for a full inquiry. Sir Geoffrey called a vote which concluded the inquiry could proceed without calling Neil Hamilton or any witnesses, including Peter Preston, then editor of the Guardian, Mr Al Fayed, or asking for any extra evidence.

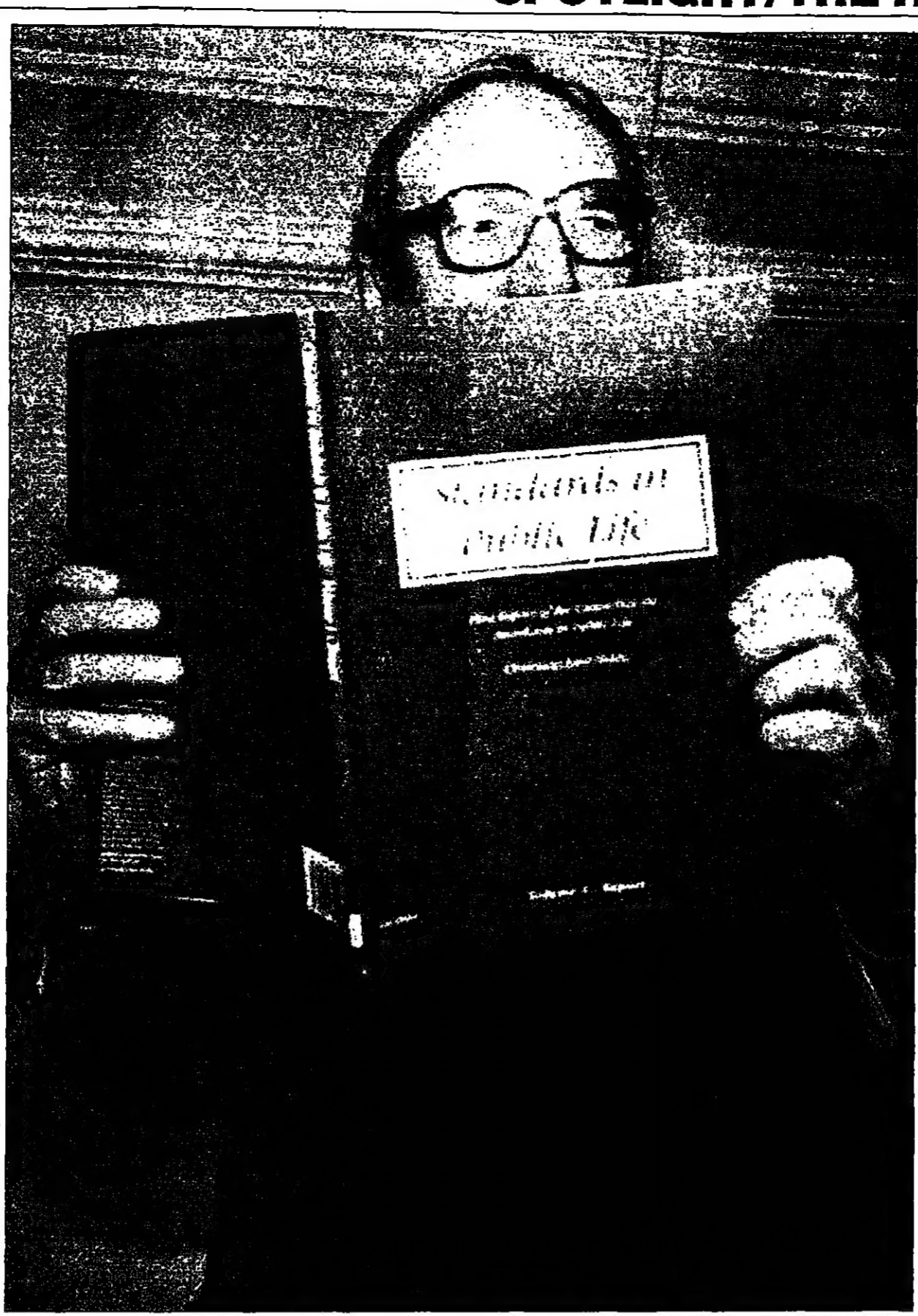
It has since come to light that Mr Al Fayed had also given details of £28,000 in cash payments and shopping vouchers to Neil and Christine Hamilton. This was not shown to the other members.

After three meetings, Labour MPs managed to convince Sir Geoffrey that Mr Preston should give evidence in January. But it was held in private and Mr Hamilton was allowed to attend to hear the Guardian's evidence. After he had given his evidence, the Conservative members used their majority to decide that no other witnesses should come, blocking Labour calls that Mr Al Fayed and Mr Greer should give evidence.

Labour MPs on the committee were furious. One former member, Dale Campbell-Savours, who had sat on the committee in 1990 at the time Ian Greer had refused to name the MPs he was paying to commission, organised a one-man "sit-in" and began disrupting proceedings every time Mr Mitchell spoke.

He was reported to the Speaker by Sir Geoffrey and on April 20 Parliament voted to exclude him.

Mr Campbell Savours pointed out that Mr Hamilton had been allowed to take notes on Mr Preston's evi-



Holding up standards... Lord Nolan's report laid down seven principles of public life

PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

dence. He said: "This amounts to a right of discovery for one side. Mr Preston would not be present to see Mr Hamilton's evidence."

But a Tory member, Peter Griffiths, MP for Portsmouth North, argued that the committee, needed the "House's protection to carry out its duties." Relations with Labour members finally boiled over on May 9 when the Tories threw out a Labour motion to extend the inquiry to look at the voucher payments to Mr Hamilton. The meeting ended in disarray and Labour walked out.

BY JUNE, when the committee had finally produced its report, Labour MPs refused to sign it. The committee found that Mr Hamilton should have declared his stay at the Ritz but decided to take no action. The question of £28,000 of Harrods vouchers — the only sum committee members saw — was glossed over.

No investigation could be made since "it had been argued that the libel action [by Mr Hamilton and Mr Greer against the Guardian] might be prejudiced by any parliamentary inquiry," said the report.

By July, the action had moved to the Privileges Committee which had been examining a complaint against Mr Preston for using what became known as a "cod fax" — a fake report to the Paris Ritz for Jonathan Aitken's bill.

This parallel committee inquiry, kept in secret session by the casting vote of its Cabinet minister chairman, Tony Newton, also involved embarrassing allegations from Mr Al Fayed — this time about Mr Aitken's stay at the Ritz.

Mr Newton wanted to close the inquiry and prepared an interim report accepting Mr Hamilton's apology but not investigating any of the circum-

stances of Mr Aitken's stay. On this one rare occasion, the Conservative built-in majority was overturned and members insisted that Mr Al Fayed was called. However, Parliament went into recess and Mr Al Fayed was not called until November. After Mr Al Fayed handed over a dossier detailing the cash and voucher payments, Mr Newton decided the document should be left on the table.

In January, a row broke out when Sir Nicholas Lyell, the Attorney general, tried to censor the report by removing all references to "cash for questions", arguing again about the Guardian libel case. David Alton, Liberal MP for Moseley Hill, Liverpool, said he would produce a minority report, publishing everything.

A final meeting at the end of January agreed a compromise. The report would not include any detail of "cash for questions" but the full dossier would be passed to Sir Gordon Downey, the new Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, so he can start a fresh investigation when his successor body, the Privileges and Standards Committee is set up later in the year.

The new committee is chaired by Cabinet minister Tony Newton and its membership includes Sir Geoffrey Johnson-Smith, the man who first kept quiet about the identical information.

This dossier has remained with Sir Gordon for eight months and nothing has happened. He will now have to pick it up again as part of his new inquiry, which cannot start until the new session of Parliament in November.

Meanwhile, this year Neil Hamilton was again elected as a senior officer on the Tory backbench trade and industry committee chaired by his friend, Sir Michael Grylls. Both now hold the same jobs they did in 1988 — when Mr Al Fayed paid Mr Hamilton in cash and kind to table parliamentary questions.

Blow by blow

How the cash for questions saga unfolded

- 1994
October 26 Guardian article claims that Neil Hamilton took cash to ask questions in the Commons.
October 28 Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life set up.
November 22 Members' Interests Committee agrees to consider complaint from Alex Carlisle about Hamilton, but stay at the Ritz and the cash for questions.
November 23 Conservative majority and a government whip, Andrew Mitchell as a member, Conservative dominated Committee decide not to call any key witnesses, including Hamilton.
1995
February 7 Dale Campbell-Savours, Labour MP for Workington, asks for details of the proceedings of the Committee's members' interests Committee and insists to be heard. He is suspended. He was protesting about the appointment of Mitchell to the Committee.
March 4 Draft report of the Members' Interests Committee is published to support Hamilton. It should be found in breach of the rules over his stay at the Ritz. MPs divided on what to do.
March 8 Savours again intervenes in the Committee. He is reported to the Speaker of the House.
April 3 First report of the Committee of Privileges into complaints concerning an article in the Sunday Times of 10 July 1994 relating to his conduct of members. Two MPs suspended for 10 and 20 days respectively. 1 MP reprimanded.
May 2 Government Minister uses casting vote to keep in secret session the Privileges Committee investigation into the "cod fax" affair.
May 9 Members' Interests Committee into Hamilton's stay at the Ritz. Inquiries in detail when members cannot agree whether to extend the inquiry to look at the allegations of cash and vouchers from Al Fayed. Conservative majority. Sir Lyell tried to censor the report, while the Conservative majority argued the inquiry could not be extended because of the pending libel action. Labour MPs walk out.
May 11 Nolan Report published. Major accepts the "bread threat" of the report.
May 18 MPs debate Lord Nolan's report.
June 2 Members' Interests Committee concludes Hamilton "imprudent" but has registered stay at the Ritz. No further action.
June 21 Preston called in a witness to the Privileges Committee over "cod fax".
September 11 Fayed called to give evidence to the Privileges Committee.
September 9 Fayed was to disclose that he had given £28,000 in cash payments and shopping vouchers to Neil and Christine Hamilton.
November 22 First report of the committee of privileges into the cod fax. Confidential evidence on cash for questions passed to Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards.
December 28 Hamilton's resignation. He had asked action against Guardian.
January 5 John Major announces he will send all "cash for questions" evidence to Sir Gordon Downey, including Government documents.



Revolt grows in constituency

Hamilton should go gracefully, say local activists. Peter Hetherington reports

ATORY grassroots revolt against Neil Hamilton was gaining momentum last night as some activists and a growing number of party supporters called on the cash-for-questions MP to quit. The Conservative hierarchy in Tatton publicly expressed confidence in the beleaguered MP, but senior officials were left in no doubt they risk losing the support of many Tories if he stands at the next election.

Constituency officers earlier issued a statement on the steps of Knutsford Conserva-

tive Club. The local party president, Jan Varney, said: "The media keep pressing me to know when we are having a crisis meeting to discuss Neil's future. We will not be having one. Neil has absolute confidence that he will be exonerated and we have absolute confidence in him."

The local party chairman, Alan Barnes, accused the Guardian of a "dishonest and hysterical vendetta" against the MP whose candidature had been endorsed by the local party last March. Outside the Tory club, how-

ever, Conservative voters voiced disquiet. A long-standing club member, a retired British Airways transport manager, said: "I cannot see him surviving for much longer. Things are building up against him."

Ian Spencer, a long-time Tory voter who runs a fish shop in Knutsford, spoke for many: "The general feeling is that he should go gracefully." A pensioner, a former businessman, said: "I've been a Tory supporter all my life and I'm a bit disgusted. He won't retain this seat (maj: 15,463) if he stands again."

More alarmingly for the Tories, some supporters who backed the MP earlier this week now seem to be having a

change of heart. "People were fairly sympathetic at first, but the mood is changing," said a retired local government officer. He cited the eleventh commandment — "Thou shalt not get found out."

Another leading Tory said he felt Central Office would soon start leaning on the local association. "Will they want to lose such a safe seat?"

The MP himself told one source in the constituency that he was "fighting for survival". But in an interview with BBC Greater Manchester Radio, Mr Hamilton's wife, Christine, maintained that the couple had the backing of John Major, and claimed support was "stiffening" in the constituency.



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JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY

Fighting talk

'How could I stay in a Tory Party that has given up on fairness? How could I not join a Labour Party which, as Tony [Blair] said, is dedicated to easing our society, torn and lacerated as it is?'

Alan Howarth, Labour MP and former Tory education minister

'Being a prospective candidate in a key seat was rather like being in love. Suddenly my whole life revolved around one thing — Stevenage'

Barbara Follett

'The only Tory worth backing to win at the moment is Frankie Dettori'

John Prescott, deputy Labour leader

'I say this to the Tories: if you don't want the sleaze, don't take the fees'

Jack Straw, shadow home secretary

'Ask me my three main priorities and I tell you: education, education and education'

Tony Blair



Blackpool waves... Tony Blair, his wife Cherie and deputy leader John Prescott soak up the applause after delegates were told that victory was within their grasp. PHOTOGRAPH DON MORRIS

Fighting talk

'Make sure we have done nothing that falls short of our best, so we can go forward, united in our purpose, proud of our history and our principles, proud of a leader who showed such vision, passion and commitment in his speech and determined to win a Labour victory'

John Prescott

'For years we have said that no one will believe pre-election. Tory tax cuts can last. Suddenly Kenneth Clarke — new Clarke, new honesty — tells us he agrees'

Gordon Brown, shadow chancellor

'Enmity is an old-fashioned luxury we can no longer afford'

Baroness Castle

A new excuse for railway failure... thieves on the line

Andrew Smith on the privatisation of Railtrack

'Labour has come home to you. So come home to us. Labour is coming home'

Tony Blair

We're ready to govern, says Prescott

'Great exercise in democracy' gives members say on manifesto

Michael White Political Editor

JOHN PRESCOTT ended Labour's impressive display of unity and purpose at Blackpool this week by putting party supporters on election alert, saying: 'We are united and ready to govern.'

In a rallying call, the party's deputy leader told delegates that victory was within their grasp. 'The countdown starts now. Victory will not come easily. So during these next 200 days ask yourself each day, 'Did I do enough today? Could I have done more to secure a Labour victory?'

with a vision of where the country should be going. In an upbeat and often humorous message, Mr Prescott hailed a successful conference, saying: 'This week will go down in history as the week when Labour was reborn, proud of its heritage, confident of its future, and has clearly proved it is ready for government.'

over the cash for questions controversy and urged John Major to abandon his refusal to let Lord Nolan investigate party political funding. 'Neil Hamilton, that guardian of Tory morals, told the deputy prime minister he had no financial relationship with a lobbying company. But now we hear he did take payments after all. But will he resign? No, Tories never know when to say sorry, apologise or resign.'

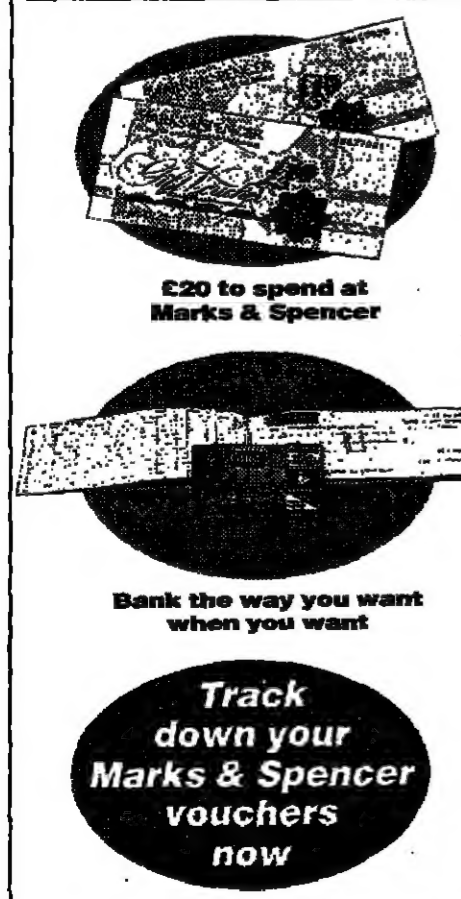
overwhelmingly endorsed Tony Blair's rolling manifesto, New Labour, New Life for Britain, with a 96 per cent vote in favour. The policy statement now goes to a full ballot of around 3 million party members and trade union levy-payers, in what Mr Prescott called 'one of the greatest exercises in party democracy in history.'

was always a remote chance — even with the jitters over pensions policy. After 17 years out of office, the Labour movement is like a marathon runner, straining at every muscle to keep going and cross the finishing line as victor. It can be an impressive spectacle when MPs and activists with sharply divergent views amicably bury their differences. But it can also be dispiriting, turning a conference which was once an unpredictable roller-coaster into 'made for TV' blandness red-

olent of American presidential conventions. Blackpool '86 had its moments. Barbara Castle vs Harriet Harman, Ann Pearson's harrowing plea on behalf of the Dunblane parents, Clare Short's discipline. Lady Turner's defence of Ian Greer, Alan Howarth's debut. Above all, the fervent eloquence of Tony Blair on Tuesday. It wasn't to everyone's taste, but with textual skill and sensitivity, he managed to say things that might have got Neil Kinnock lynched. Though his tone was un-

ashamedly centrist, he felt confident enough to make friendly overtures to the unions, to whom he again promised 'fairness, not favours.' In his speech on Tuesday, Mr Blair invoked fading memories of how it felt in 1945 and 1964, when Labour did indeed represent the people's hopes and fears. In a cynical age, these things come harder. But the mood in Blackpool this week was not cynical. They think they can win — and make a real difference.

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Michael White

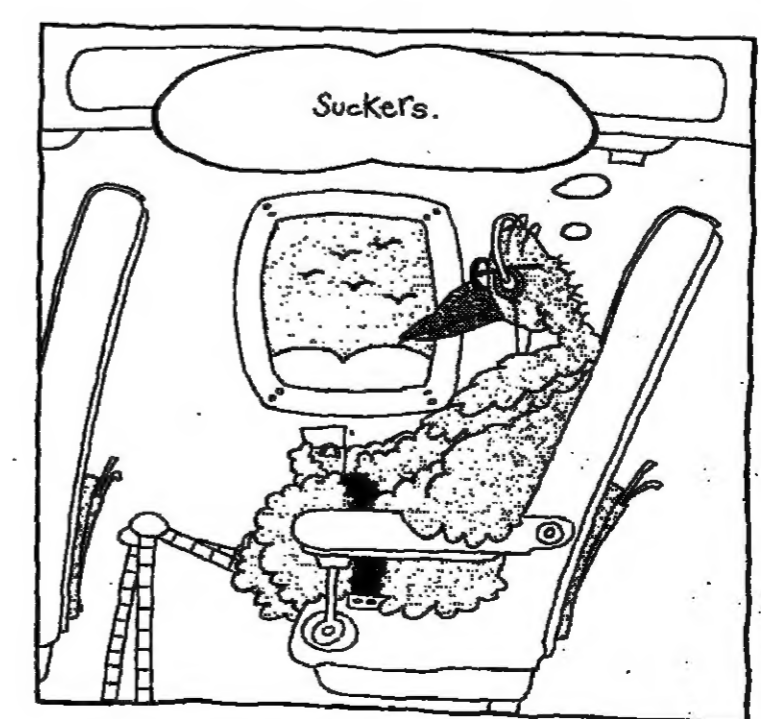
THE Labour leadership yesterday moved to reassure anxious party activists that no changes are planned to the traditional form of the conference, or its supremacy over policy. Ironically, on a day peppered with appeals for pre-election unity, the last debate of the 1996 Blackpool conference allowed some speakers to vent their frustration that they had 'not been listened to' in a smoothly stage-managed week.

Mr Blair and his allies tried to calm fears of further reform. 'Conference is the policy-making body of the Labour Party. It is set out in the rules and there are no plans to change that. The only way that the role of conference could be altered is by conference itself,' said the party's general secretary, Tom Sawyer. Mr Sawyer, who had earlier spoken of the 'scores of ways we can improve and modernise this conference' to make it 'more member-friendly,' continued: 'I do not believe that hundreds of people out there waving their hands in the air at the possible opportunity of having three minutes at the rostrum really adds up to a democratic conference-making process.'

Through 80 per cent of this year's constituency delegates are first-timers, such talk will fuel speculation that the leadership wants to streamline the conference after the next election. One critic of what is seen as excessive centralisation, Joan Abrams from Hazel Grove, Manchester, protested: 'During this conference it has been obvious that very few people who disagree with the platform have been allowed to speak.'

national executive committee (NEC) — and a likely Labour government. Mr Sawyer singled out the national policy forum, a reform instituted by John Smith, which meets twice a year behind closed doors to discuss policy. 'It has been very successful for people involved. It has not been successful for the thousands of people not involved', he conceded. A motion was accepted to extend the concept of forums to constituency level. Karen Price, of Neath party, said: 'People should not take party activists for granted. Because policy is centralised, constituency members feel they don't own the policy. People at the grassroots don't want passive consultation — we want direct participation.'

Fortunately, the Tory conference comes last, and when that repulsive rabble are fresh in your mind, you want to wipe them away with every fibre in your bathroom. Jeremy Hardy



The Earlybird books early and gets himself a nice seat by the window.

Book early and get the seats you want. The family can all sit together or you can grab yourself a seat with a good view. But only if you're an Earlybird.

THOMSON

The Week page 18

Handwritten signature or scribble at the bottom of the page.

Firms find new market for medicines on Internet

Paris incensed by mail-order drugs

Paul Webster in Paris

FRANCE is considering ways to stop international mail-order wholesalers selling prescription medicines on the Internet and measures to block Internet "recipes" for banned drugs such as ecstasy and LSD.

Germany and the Netherlands advertising on the Internet. Mr Girard said the health ministry condemned the traffic, but had legal powers only to confiscate medicines detected by customs.

Justice ministry officials said measures including legislation were being considered alongside others to stop the spread of Internet pornography.

An investigation by the French manufacturers' official body, Syndicat Général de la Pharmacie has discovered that the list of mail-order drugs available ranges from pills for inducing hallucinations to anti-depressants, such as Prozac, and anti-ageing medicines.

Most are sold openly by US mail-order firms with apparently limitless supplies

of drugs from multinational pharmaceutical firms. Some offer 24-hour delivery and accept credit cards from foreign customers.

While there has always been a mail-order business for patent drugs, the Internet has seen an explosion of highly organised sales outlets. Advertisements detail the effects of the medicines, and special offers for big orders suggest they are aimed at dealers in banned substances.

Recipes show how prescription medicines can be used in the manufacture of ecstasy and LSD.

Internet users are also being offered mail-order catalogues which offer newly developed illegal "smart drugs" that induce euphoria when combined with alcohol.

EU leaders seek to tackle Maastricht Two deadlock

John Palmer in Dublin

EUROPEAN UNION heads of government begin an eight-hour closed summit in Dublin this morning to try to break the deadlock in negotiations for a new treaty on closer union.

Frustrated at the protracted talks, most EU leaders are determined to conclude a successor to the 1991 Maastricht treaty by next summer — even if this means that more ambitious moves to a federal-style political union are left to yet another constitutional reform treaty by the end of the decade.

The Irish prime minister, John Bruton, reluctantly called today's special one-day summit under pressure from President Jacques Chirac of France and Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany to speed up the Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) negotiations. Mr Bruton warned yesterday that no formal agreement would emerge, but hinted that a second EU summit in Dublin in December could bring a breakthrough.

There will be no conclusions reached at tomorrow's meeting. Rather, we will be using it as a pre-preparation for the important work that is

to be done at the normal European Council, which will take place in December this year," Mr Bruton said.

"A historic opportunity now exists for a political and economic restructuring of Europe."

Most of the 15 heads of government accept the urgent need for more effective and democratic structures, to allow the EU to accept new members from central Europe and the Mediterranean.

"The Europe we built was not intended to house so many. Extending the accommodation currently available is [the] task of the IGC," the Dutch prime minister, Wim Kok, told the College of Europe in Bruges.

Although Mr Kok suggested last week that a "Maastricht Two" treaty might be delayed until the end of 1997 — partly to give time for a new British government to decide its strategic task of the IGC, the Dutch prime minister, Wim Kok, told the College of Europe in Bruges.

Chancellor Kohl's declaration here this week that any unresolved issues could be referred to a "Maastricht Three" treaty increases the chances of all 15 EU countries signing the Maastricht Two treaty next summer. The decision by France and

Germany to make the dash to monetary union in 1999 their overriding priority, and to scale down their proposals for radical changes in foreign, security and defence policy, has helped narrow differences between the other 14 countries and even reduced the still yawning gulf with Britain.

The French foreign minister, Hervé de Charette, said in London yesterday that Britain and France had a similar approach on foreign and security policy, on the need to strengthen the role of national parliaments in EU affairs and on giving larger countries more votes in the Council of Ministers.

But Germany, France and virtually all other countries will insist on Britain accepting more majority voting and a greater role for the European Parliament in less contentious fields, such as social, environmental, transport and other policies.

John Major and other leaders appear anxious to avoid the public slanging match they had over mad cow disease at the Florence summit earlier this year. But the Prime Minister knows Dublin could trigger a dangerous political explosion at next week's Conservative Party conference in Bournemouth.



The tower of ash rising from the glacier in Iceland shows the ferocity of the eruption. PHOTOGRAPH: APRI SAEBERG-MORSLUND

Iceland braced for floods

Hilmar Helga Sigurdardottir in Reykjavik

ICELANDERS braced themselves yesterday for massive flooding following a volcanic eruption under a glacier in the south of the country.

Emergency teams were toiling round the clock to build causeways and make preparations to prevent the expected huge flows of water from wrecking bridges, roads and power stations.

Parts of the southern coast were closed to traffic as water levels in lakes under the glacier rose to their highest this century.

"We are waiting for the floods to start. And the longer we wait, the bigger the floods are going to be," said Ragnar Stefansson, head of geophysics at Iceland's meteorological institute.

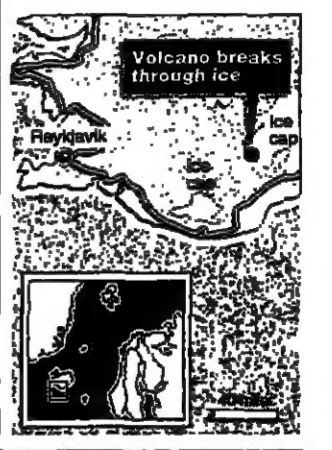
On Wednesday the volcano smashed through the Vatnajökull glacier, which is 600m thick in places and covers about 10 per cent of Iceland, at a point some 120 miles east of Reykjavik.

It spewed black clouds five miles into the air, forming a sulphurous tower of ash visible from most of Iceland. Occasional bursts of red lightning lit up the air over a six-mile fissure.

There are no settlements near the site but geologists said there was a risk of contamination from the ash, which contained poisonous fluorides.

The eruption was accompanied by tremors, some registering more than four points on the Richter scale.

Air traffic controllers said many airlines had requested permission to fly over the eruption to show passengers the sight. — Reuters.



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Spain aims to end threadbare times at royal carpet maker

Our Correspondent in Madrid

THE craftsmen at Madrid's 275-year-old royal carpet factory have been staging a sit-in to try to avert the threat of bankruptcy arising from its fall from official grace under General Franco.

The factory, founded in 1721 by King Felipe V, has had a largely prosperous history. The painter Francisco de Goya worked here for 20 years and many tapestries, including a set in the dining-room at Sandringham House, were based on his designs.

The tide turned, however, in 1963 when General Franco, who had created a rival factory in 1941, withdrew state business from the royal establishment.

The workshop survived at a reduced level by relying on private commissions. In its heyday it employed 400, now it has 42 workers. Its financial plight has worsened in the past year and the present director, Lívino Stuyck, stopped paying staff six months ago.

Last month they began the round-the-clock sit-in. "Usually workers who don't get paid want to string up the management," Mr Stuyck said. "But that's not the case here. We back each other because we all want this place to survive."

Yesterday normal production resumed after a Madrid savings bank put up 40 million pesetas (about £200,000) to pay the salaries, in return for 16 carpets and four tapestries.

The agreement is part of a government-sponsored plan for a foundation to safeguard the factory's future.

Carpets and tapestries are not cheap — some cost up to £10,000 per square metre — but Mr Stuyck says there is a market.

After Franco's death, governments were deaf to pleas for help. But the sit-in aroused the interest of the new conservative cabinet.

Mr Stuyck is optimistic. "It will take two or three years to set up a new system... but I hope finally that we are on the point of safeguarding its future."

Culture by decree puts arts at risk in Slovakia

Ian Traynor in Bratislava

SEVEN years after Czechoslovakia married the worlds of theatre and politics by putting a playwright, Vaclav Havel, in the presidential castle, the two have come unstuck in independent Slovakia.

Smoke-filled rooms at the national theatre in the capital, Bratislava, were a hubbub of outrage and conspiracy yesterday after several days of high drama on stage moved to strikes and protests on the streets against the authoritarian government of the prime minister, Vladimir Meciar.

Two days after the government sacked Dusan Jambrik, the popular head of the national theatre, and replaced him with a Meciar loyalist, Miroslav Fischer, and one day after the government fired the head of the Slovak

Thursday the national theatre went on strike.

Last night, after negotiations with the culture ministry, the theatre put on a performance of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*. But Mr Jambrik, the sacked chief, aged 59, warned that the strike had merely been suspended.

Faxes of support flooded in from across Europe, including one from Richard Eyre at the National Theatre in London, expressing concern about "what is happening in the hub of the Slovak part of the 'velvet revolution' in 1989 that toppled communism. It is now back in the mood to revolt.

The national theatre was the hub of the Slovak part of the "velvet revolution" in 1989 that toppled communism. It is now back in the mood to revolt.

Mr Meciar's record in office has knocked Slovakia out of the frontrunning group of east European countries being considered for membership of Nato and the European Union.

At the centre of the actors' row is the tough-talking and much-disputed culture minister, Ivan Hudec, a political survivor who was a prominent Communist under the old regime and jumped ship to join Mr Meciar's Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, the ruling party.

He denounced his opponents as "anti-Slovak" and the theatre community as a den of drug abusers. He sacked Petr Mikulik, another key director, during the summer holidays because he refused to sign a decree giving the minister exclusive control of top theatre, opera and ballet appointments.

Mr Hudec survived two votes of no confidence in parliament last month because Mr Meciar ordered his deputies to abstain, rendering the vote inoperative.

Mr Jambrik complained yesterday that after he was stripped of power to make appointments, his loyalist successor, Mr Fischer, is to have those powers reinstated. Mr



Vladimir Meciar: Sackings have led to artists' revolt

Fischer is an opera producer and a failed election candidate of Mr Meciar's party. At a confrontation with the actors' company on Thursday, he admitted he could not recall when he had last attended a performance of the company he now runs.

More than 300 Slovak artists, film-makers, writers and curators launched a petition entitled "Let's Save Culture", demanding Mr Fischer's resignation.

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Washington sends Warren Christopher to opening session to halt disintegration in Middle East

New hopes for peace talks

Derek Brown in Jerusalem

HOPES of progress in the Israeli-Palestinian emergency peace talks were boosted yesterday by the White House decision to send Warren Christopher, the United States secretary of state, to the opening session tomorrow.

He is expected to have separate meetings with Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, and Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian Authority president. It is unclear whether he will attend the main negotiating session, to be held at Erez, on the northern border of the Gaza Strip.

In an attempt to prevent further clashes before the talks, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation set up "no-go" areas for Palestinian demonstrators in the Gaza Strip yesterday.

Mr Christopher's intervention, at the behest of President Clinton, reflects the dependency felt in Washington at the disintegration of the Middle East peace process.

The peace all but evaporated last week when about 70 people were killed in three days of vicious clashes between Israeli and Palestinian forces. A hastily arranged summit meeting in Washington on Tuesday and Wednesday ended in failure, with Israel accusing the Palestinians of systematically organising the clashes and the Palestinians complaining that Israel has deliberately reneged on its promise to hand over more power and land to the self-rule authority Mr Arafat leads.

Widespread suspicion in the European Union that Israel is stalling the peace process were given voice in Naples yesterday by the Italian foreign minister, Lamberto



An Arab leaves the heavily guarded al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem yesterday, a week after Israeli troops killed three worshippers. PHOTOGRAPH: JOAO SILVA

Dini. "There is no alternative to the peace process and there is no alternative to implementing the accords which have already been signed," he said at a meeting of Italian and French leaders.

Romano Prodi, the Italian prime minister, and President Jacques Chirac of France predicted after meeting in Naples that today's EU summit in Dublin would call for a revival of the peace process, and an EU role in it.

Mr Chirac said Europe was a leading financial-aid donor in the region and was eager not to let "intolerance and hatred" gain the upper hand.

The Palestinians remain incensed by the Israeli decision to extend the tourist tunnel near the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem's Old City. There was high tension in the mosque yesterday after a call by the Islamist movement Hamas for "total confrontations" with Israeli forces after Friday prayers.

But, with 3,000 Israeli police and paramilitaries crowded into the Old City, the noon prayers passed off peacefully. Officials of the Islamic waqf (religious administration) pounced on a handful of youths who raised cries of "Allahu Akbar" (God is great) and hustled them aside.

On Friday last week a hail of stones at the end of prayers brought a mass invasion of the mosque compound by Israeli forces. They opened fire, killing three Arab youths. Yesterday, although a few stones were thrown, the police stayed outside the compound.

Jewish worshippers at the Western (Wailing) Wall, beside al-Aqsa, were ordered to stand clear of the compound for 10 minutes in case stones were thrown.

The West Bank and Gaza Strip also remained calm yesterday. Security forces on both sides have been put on high alert, and have strict orders to prevent new confrontations.

Afghan turmoil rattles Central Asia

Chris Bird in Alma Ata

THE turmoil in Afghanistan since the Islamist Taliban militia seized the capital, Kabul, last week has sent shockwaves through its northern neighbours, the former Soviet republics in Central Asia.

Leaders of the five Central Asian states, who met yesterday in Alma Ata, capital of Kazakhstan, to discuss ways of preventing the fighting in Afghanistan spilling into their territories, fear radical Islam and the unrest it could trigger in their ethnically diverse countries.

They are also afraid that Russia, their former colonial master, may use any spread in radical Islam to the former Soviet republics to strengthen its influence over the young states and their vast energy and mineral resources.

"Unfortunately the interests of many great states are focused in Afghanistan," Kazakhstan's president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, said before the conference. "Now what is



important is not to meddle in the internal affairs." Afghanistan borders three of Central Asia's five states: Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. They were complaining about Afghanistan's potentially destabilising influence even before Taliban's victory.

Afghanistan's most obvious influence is in Tajikistan, where a four-year civil war between the government and Islamic fighters has killed tens of thousands and displaced even more.

The Afghan warlord Ahmed Shah Massoud, an ethnic Tajik, and other Afghan factions have allowed Taliban guerrillas to set up bases and train in the mountains across the Amu Darya river, which separates the two countries.

Tajikistan's Muslim opposition leader, Said Abdullo Nuri, is based in the northern town of Taloqan, and thousands of refugees from Tajikistan shelter in dusty-brown camps in Afghanistan. A sizable part of the Afghan drug trade is now routed through Central Asia, bringing crime, corruption and addiction.

Human rights organisations say Islamic leaders have been imprisoned in Uzbekistan, which regards Islam as a state religion, and in opposition. The country's state-controlled television, monitored by the BBC, expressed "serious concern and alarm" at the crisis in Afghanistan after a special session of the Uzbek National Security Council this week.

But President Islam Karimov has kept his counsel. Diplomats say Uzbekistan has given low-key support to the powerful faction which stands in the way of complete Taliban control of Afghanistan, that of the ethnic Uzbek warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum, who holds territory in the north next to Uzbekistan.

"The Uzbeks are probably pressuring Dostum to do a deal with the Taliban," a Western diplomat based in the region said recently. He said any talk of a Taliban invasion of Central Asia was "pie in the sky".

But most Afghans in territory controlled by Gen Dostum believe it will not be long before Taliban tries to take the north. This would give Russia an excuse to beef up its presence in the region, citing instability on its vulnerable southern borders.

News in brief

'Busy' Lebed snubs defence chiefs despite Yeltsin order

RUSSIA's security chief Alexander Lebed did not attend a meeting of security ministers yesterday, contravening President Yeltsin's order to work with other members of the government, writes David Hearst in Moscow.

His aides said he was busy working on documents signed with the Chechen separatist leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev on Thursday. But Gen Lebed's absence from the first meeting of the defence council, chaired by the prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, seemed to be a robust reply to the dressing-down he received from Mr Yeltsin after he criticised the government.

Bikers driven out of town

Denmark launched an offensive on warring motorcycle gangs yesterday, presenting parliament with rush legislation banning gang members from setting up attack-prone bases in residential areas.

Meteor flash

A falling meteor streaked through the skies, creating an exceptionally brilliant flash which could be seen from California to New Mexico. — AP.

£76m deal for Maori tribe

THE New Zealand government has settled the biggest land claim ever filed by Maoris, 152 years after colonisers swindled a tribe out of almost half of the country, and eight days before elections.

Laundered cash

Three men in their 50s were in custody in Ajaccio, Corsica, on suspicion of using a home-made cocktail of cleaning products to launder illegal security ink from 100- and 200-franc banknotes stolen in a raid on an armoured car in July. — Reuter.

Poll date opposed

The chairman of the security body charged with organising Bosnian elections, the Swiss foreign minister Flavio Cotti, is opposed to holding municipal polls in November as planned. — Reuter.

Stéphanie divorce

A Monaco court yesterday ended the marriage of Princess Stéphanie to her former bodyguard husband, Daniel Ducruet, who was photographed in a sex romp with a Belgian stripper. — Reuter.

Ozone layer at risk

Destruction of the Antarctic ozone layer is worsening; the gas is almost gone in the atmospheric layer from 55,000ft to 72,000ft, the World Meteorological Organisation said yesterday. — AP.

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The Week page 15

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Intelligence services are not always clever

Commentary
Martin Woollacott

SO the Germans were the sausage dealers and the British were the colonists, London was Sidon, Washington was Carthage, and Roosevelt was Kapitan. The latest batch of secret documents gives us some nice Moscow-Centre jargon. It also adds detail to what we already knew — that in espionage, the cold war started before the war against the Nazis was won.

The spying contest between east and west which began in those days went on for nearly 50 years, pivoting as one writer has put it, around the possibility that between us we could "end civilisation in a day". Whether intelligence, ours and theirs, helped to avoid nuclear war, and whether intelligence, ours alone, helped to bring down

the Soviet Union, are questions still vigorously argued. But as that debate goes on, another has begun about the function of intelligence in the post-cold-war world. What are Sidon's snoopers and Carthage's code breakers up to now that there is no serious conflict with the Russians? The efforts of the intelligence services to reinvent themselves have been noticeable. In the west, they have switched emphasis to terrorism, the surveillance of "rogue states", and economic intelligence, and are showing a keen interest in sharing narcotics and organised crime with police organisations. They have even moved

the Foreign Office, and that US Intelligence costs around a tenth of the American defence budget. Expensive, yet the list of failures is, as Herman agrees, an extensive one. "Warning failures" go back a long way in intelligence history to Pearl Harbour and the German invasion of Russia during the second world war, but more recent examples have included the failure to forecast the actions that led to the Korean War, the Sino-Indian war, the Yom Kippur War, the Falklands War, and the Gulf War, and, many would add, the failure to forecast the collapse of the Soviet Union. In Britain, the failure to warn of the IRA's decision to break the ceasefire, at least in unequivocal terms, is another example. Egg, it seems, is a permanent resident on the face of intelligence.

Apart from the failures to warn of impending catastrophes, there are the double agents, the extragagances, and the irregularities — not ancient affairs like Philby, but matters of the very recent past. Among recent double agents there was Aldrich Ames, who cheerfully betrayed dozens of men and women, trading their lives for the money to live a luxurious suburban life. He is an appalling figure, but even more appalling is the fact that the CIA ignored the evidence pointing at him for so long. Among the scandals, the CIA's connections with murderous soldiers and secret police in Central America continue to be revealed. The extravagances include what one letter writer to the Guardian memorably referred to as "the summer palace of Sargon II," the new

MI6 headquarters on the Thames. The irregularities involve cases like the British attempt to purchase intelligence on Russian forces from West German agents selling it off for private gain, which led to the resignation of the head of German Intelligence. Equally puzzling to the concerned citizen is the spying on allies that is now more and more common. Israel and France were named by the CIA earlier this year as the most active in launching new operations against the United States. With friends like these, who needs enemies? American officials at the G-7 summit in Lyons carted their suitcases to restaurants and

Unity is first and last



Martin Kettle

IT'S a coincidence rather than a conspiracy, but the two most interesting — as opposed to the two most important — speeches that I heard at Blackpool this week have both gone almost wholly unreported. The first was the speech of this year's overseas speaker, Italy's Democratic Left deputy prime minister Walter Veltroni. Veltroni is a keen admirer of what the Italians call "il progetto di Blair" and his flying visit immediately brought a much wider context to the events of the week. What struck me most was the intellectually relaxed way in which Veltroni, a product of a left which has transformed itself more thoroughly than ours, could say more clearly even than Blair where their very similar political projects are heading.

Blackpool was an astonishingly disciplined conference. But the price of that kind of success is that Labour has not yet found a way of conducting the universal conversation of the modern left in a mature and inclusive way. Other European political cultures seem to manage this better than we do. But we are also unusual compared with a sound-bite political culture such as America. As Jon Snow pointed out at a Blackpool fringe debate, this year's Democratic Convention showed that it is perfectly possible for politicians of the same party to take strongly opposed positions on important questions such as welfare without the entire edifice of party unity collapsing around them. Our political culture, Snow rightly added, confuses diversity with division. Public debate within the Labour Party is almost paralysed by the determination at all costs to avoid the appearance of disagreement. Our parties and our media are now dominated by a generation of people whose formative political experiences were the steamrollering discipline of the Thatcherite Conservative Party and the simultaneous catastrophic conflicts of Labour's Bennite era. The result is an obsession with the belief that disagreements lose elections. Tom Sawyer, a nice man and a case in point, spoke very much in this mode at Blackpool yesterday morning. We all know why Labour is like this now. But there is no doubt that it stifles a discussion which needs to find an adult outlet. And this is where the second of the speeches comes in. It was given by Robin Cook. His fringe lecture on radical politics for the new millennium was a stimulating and scrupulously party-line examination of ways in which Labour can adapt to changed times without losing confidence in itself. I suspect that we saw here a prototype of the Labour conference of the future, in which absolutely nothing of genuine interest happens on the conference floor save on exceptional occasions, and it is left to thoughtful politicians to make their often heavily annotated views known in set-piece fringe lectures.

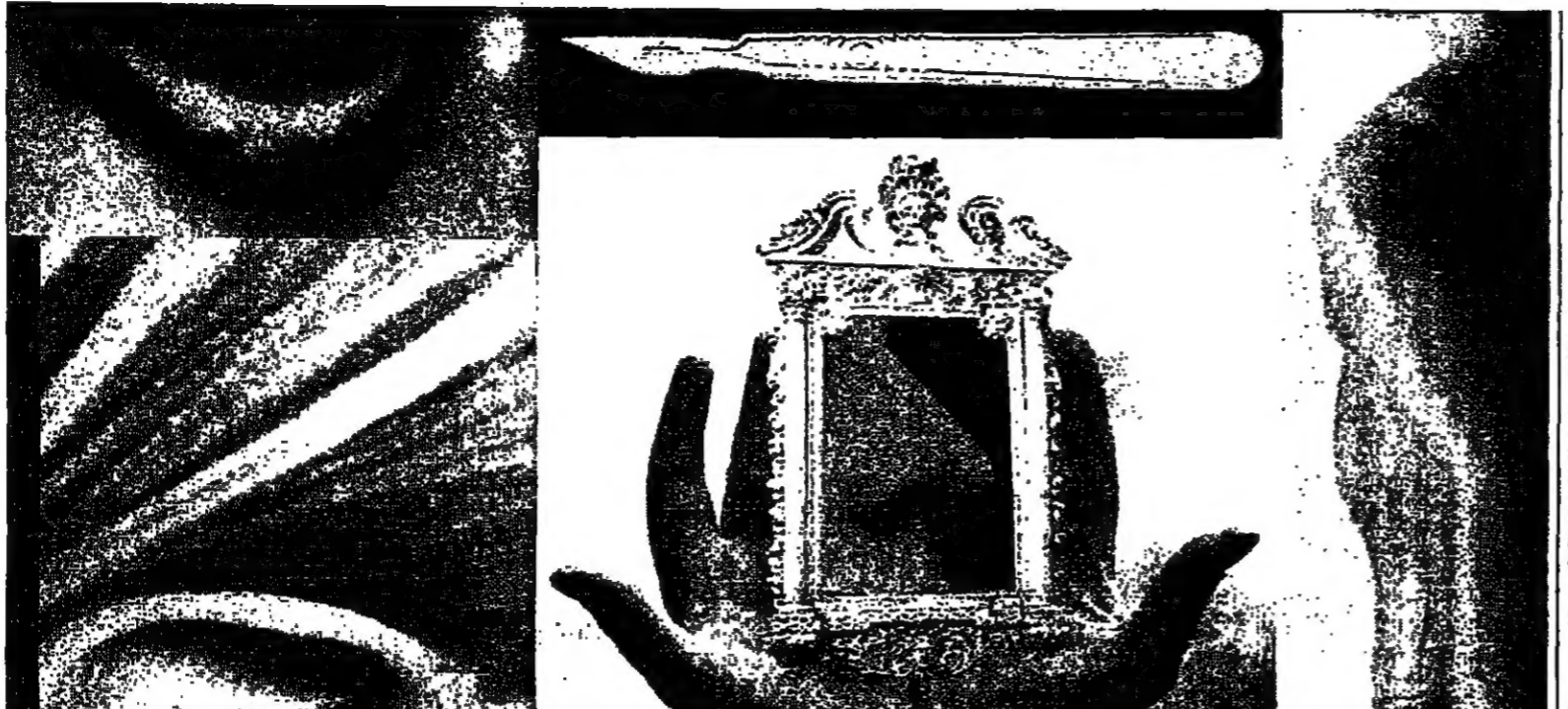


ILLUSTRATION JAMES MEALING

In the eye of the beholder

Some women have their breasts made bigger by silicone implants. Some men have their 'breasts' reduced. Rachel Cusk finds it all part of a shift towards virtual beauty, virtual sex, and a rejection of the bodies we were born with

WHEN I was younger, I used to daydream about having parts of myself chopped off. This was puberty, when the body begins alarmingly to extend its territories, acquiring regions disturbing in their savagery or mass: thickets of pubic jungle, outcrops of acne, acres of flesh, mountain ranges of greater or lesser stature. One is at once enthralled by these developments and helpless before them. The body demonstrates its mutability while at the same time exercising its insuperable will. Later, we learn how to assert at least some authority over this landscape in which we suddenly find ourselves confined for life. We become practised at cultivation. We can and do exercise our powers of husbandry. We understand that how much we can change the look of things depends on how much work we're prepared to do. And yet somewhere in this process of adolescent accommodation, ideas of justice begin to insinuate themselves. Having acquainted ourselves with our own assets, we begin to look at other people's. We realise that this body has not only been allotted to us on a patently random basis: it is actually beginning to affect what happens to us. For reasons neither of virtue nor intelligence, Jane gets more attention than me. One's lease on the body still being quite new, the possibility of returning it under some sort of dissatisfaction clause seems real enough. Its upheavals being fresh in the mind, the notion that it might spring some late

majority of girls and a sizeable minority of boys between 14 and 15 were worried about their looks, and that around the same proportion wanted to lose weight. The map of the body wherein once we contained all the secrets of human diversity, of personal destiny, of individuality and ultimate frailty, is out of date. Our perceptions of beauty are now neither pragmatic, localised nor particularly socio-cultural. They are de-personalised and global, as well as being blatantly narcissistic, its sun-tan, the toned body, the capped teeth, all desirable evidence of hours and money spent on self-worship. Beauty has lost its mystery. It is no longer God-given, but man-made. Who needs a God anyway, when for a few thousand pounds and a gym membership you can be one? The beauty industry has, until recently, been predominantly European, dominated by French products and fashions and retaining a strong element of theatre. The graceless, trashy, addictive American import — Coke, McDonald's, aerobics — has, however, time and again proved to be more powerful. It is typical of this puritanical, humourless nation that it should waste no time over the distinction between creating an illusion and being one. Like so much American culture, these images made flesh — women with cartoon breasts, men like computer-game heroes — are rooted in the imagination of a child. Which is clever, because it is the child in us — willful, irrational, insecure, prone to fantasy — that responds to them. In a global schoolyard analogy, Britain's parents would have forbidden it from playing with America, so malign is its influence. Why can't you play with France or Spain? They live so much closer! And they spend their time on proper pursuits, like football and philosophy, while America tries to work out how to stage a nuclear war in space! Cosmetic surgery, needless to say, is all the rage in the United States, with Americans spending billions of dollars on it annually. Women's

magazines have long since hidden a section of human shame behind pages of illusory perfection; but the female body has had a brutal history of long entanglement with pain at the hands of both beauty and biology. It is also firmly plighted on its own practicality, while the male is increasingly haunted by a fear of both biological and social redundancy. A sperm bank, a turkey baster and a female population invading the labour market could make times very tough. Cosmetic surgery for men both here and in the States is no longer in its infancy: American men spend \$277 million on it annually (not including hair transplants, on which a further \$789 million is spent), and clinics here put the proportion of male patients at between 20 and 40 per cent, and rising steeply. The procedures that men tend to go for are anti-redundant: drooping eyelids propped open for that vigilant look, ears pinned back to hear the approach of backstabbers, jaw wrenched forward to take the knuckled sandwich of 20th-century life.

THE British Association of Plastic Surgeons has no register of cosmetic procedures — many of which are very invasive — nor any regulatory powers over clinics. This must make that exquisitely post-modern phenomenon — suing your plastic surgeon — rather common. I spoke to the chief executive of one prominent clinic, who was expansive on the subject of what brings a growing number of male applicants to his bloody altar: an increase in confidence and self-awareness in society, apparently. It is hard to see how a surfeit of confidence could deliver a man to the operating theatre to have his "breasts" reduced (a firm favourite, apparently). Naked fear — of being thought old, unattractive, or even of having to accept your lot — would seem more likely. Other clinics prefer to take the fairy-tale, don't-worry-dear-it-was-just-a-nightmare view. Tormented by memories of being called Concorde at

school? That nose, on which you may have focused all your adolescent fury, garlanding it before the mirror with vengeful ambitions and dreams, seeing the distinct but rocky path through life with other philosophies, from the liberal to the environmentalist — a left which does not confine itself to defending what has been achieved.

If that representative sample from Veltroni sounds familiar, then so it should. Veltroni and Blairism are close cousins. But major differences nevertheless remain. In a single phrase, Veltroni can be untroubled about bracketing socialism, liberalism and environmentalism within a single political force. The ability to speak in that way is characteristic of the Italian left. But of its British cousin? I think not.

It is hard to imagine even Blair doing such a thing, especially in public. I think he aspires to this sort of confidence, but he does not yet possess it. Even Blair is forced both by Labour tradition and by a besieging media culture to move more slowly. The new political alignments embodied by the Olive Tree coalition in Italy have not taken root here and even such a radical reformer as Blair is hesitant about inviting the liberal tradition, let alone the environmentalist one, into common purpose with New Labour.

One key reason for this is the difficulty which all Labour politicians now face about speaking thoughtfully in public about ideas and philosophical principles. As everyone has pointed out,

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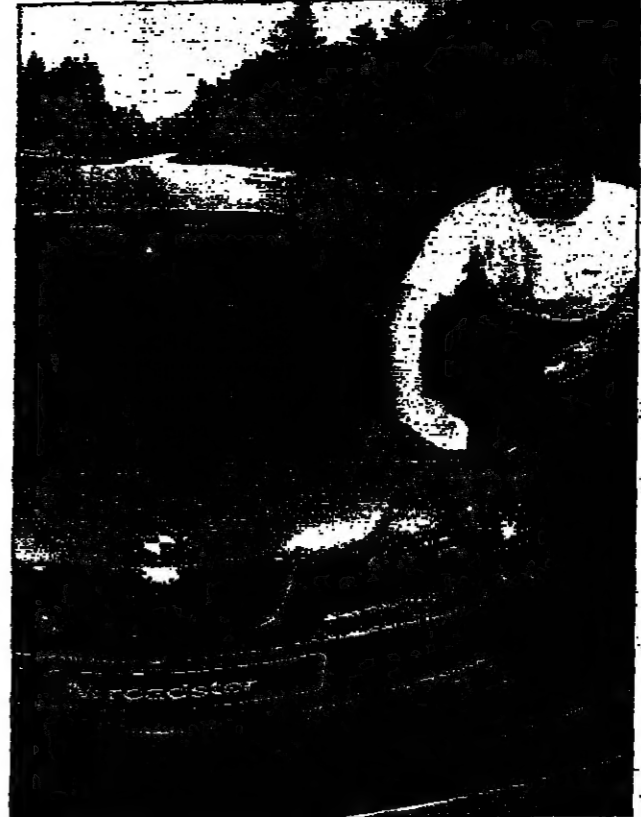
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THIS WEEK'S ESSAYIST, Rachel Cusk, won the Whitbread first novelists prize in 1993 for her book *Saving Agnes*, which focuses on a young woman coming to terms with life and work in London. She has since published *The Temporary (Picador)* and completed a further novel. Cusk, who lives in north London, was born in Canada and brought up in Los Angeles and Cambridge before studying English at Oxford. She has reviewed fiction and TV, and now writes regularly for the Guardian's Comment Page



Beyond the parc de l'exposition, Europe's car industry is desperate to find economies, says CHRIS BARRIE in Paris

Ford's new baby the Ka, tipped to tap a new market, left, polishing up the BMW M3 Roadster, right, and Saab's security system, making no bones about its credentials, at the Paris Motor Show
PHOTOGRAPHS: JACK DABAGHSAN, LAURENT REBOURS, FRANCOIS MORE



Fear grows under October sun

OCTOBER sun and the Mondial de l'auto is under way. Concept cars and new car launches are as evident as ever, the stands are crowded, the colours bright and the staff beautiful. The car is king and here at least, close to the Porte de Versailles, its subjects have plenty of cake.

But beyond the parc de l'exposition foreign threats lurk. Hans Weiser says: "We are in jeopardy on all sides. From the Americans, the Japanese and the Koreans."

Mr Weiser, in fact, works for an American group, the largest motor components company in the world, a group owned by General Motors and renamed Delphi. But he is speaking as a European rather than president of Delphi's European operations. Small, grave and rather German, he is given to understatement. And what he says implies the future is more revolution than laissez-faire.

He says: "The Japanese and Korean companies will come to Europe. They are on the way and, as far as we can see, they have very aggressive plans. That is why we must be aggressive too."

As Mr Weiser is the first to agree, the turmoil in the European car industry is due to more than anticipation of competition from low cost regions such as the Far East. The industry is beset by environmental legislation, safety laws and overcapacity. Profit margins are being squeezed

as competition drives down prices. Consumers, French newspapers are assuring exhibition visitors, have never had it so good.

The car companies are responding by beefing up the specification of their cars, or "adding value", as Mr Weiser puts it. This pushes up the costs they are anxious to drive down. By streamlining their own operations, the car companies can cut costs so far. For more lasting economies, they need suppliers to help them make more of the car outside their own assembly lines.

The suppliers are in turn reorganising as fast as possible. On offer are lucrative long term supply contracts. But to win them, they need technical expertise, the ability to apply it worldwide, and the financial muscle to set up plants sometimes close to the car factories, sometimes far away in low cost areas.

This reorganisation is causing mounting concern that the industry may "hollow out", with thousands of jobs relocated to eastern Europe and the Far East. Mr Weiser predicts that Delphi will continue to set up more capacity in eastern Europe for another five years before the right balance is reached. Some 10,000 of the group's 36,000 employees work in eastern Europe today. Growth should prevent job cuts in the west, but eastern Europe will do better.

Mr Weiser estimates labour costs about \$2 an hour in Romania, \$30 in Germany, \$25

in France and \$18 in the UK. The attractions of the east are clear.

There is not a penny, centime or pence to spare. When the European Commission hands down tougher environmental laws, it is the fuel and emissions systems suppliers that bear much of the burden. When safety laws are drafted, they affect the steering and braking companies, the seat belt makers, the electronics firms. The car company tailors the solution to each design; the supplier finds the solution in the first place.

There is, as a result, a relentless pressure on the parts industry, which is forcing through a wave of mergers, acquisitions and closures. Many go unnoticed. But two cross-border deals recently drew attention to this restructuring. The German company Bosch is to merge with US group Allied Signal, while Lucas of the UK has merged with Vario of the US.

Mr Weiser's company is forecast to increase its European sales at 15 per cent a year. The company is in the running to buy others, but wants technology, not market share. Mr Weiser appreciates that the prospect of the largest component company in the world becoming even bigger causes concern among its clients who like to have a choice of supplier.

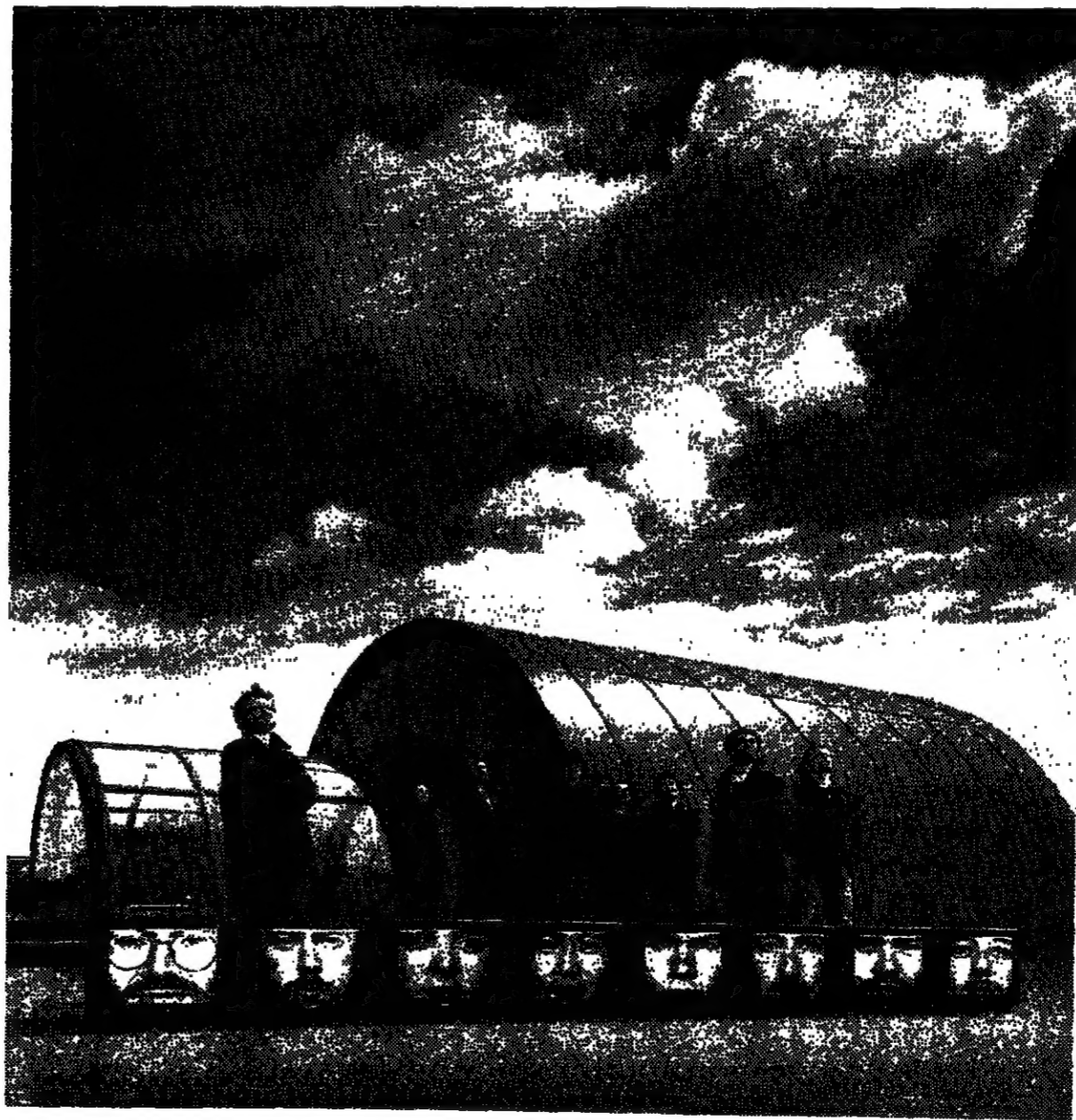
But Delphi's progress has been hampered by the identity of its shareholder. Peugeot boss Jacques Calvet scuppered Delphi's plans to take a stake in Valeo, the leading French components group, because it is a GM subsidiary.

The episode was not missed by the American financial markets which suspect that GM is preparing to float Delphi off to appease shareholders fed up with the shares' sluggish performance — an

issue Mr Weiser declines to discuss.

Whatever the prospects of Delphi becoming independent, for many smaller companies the restructuring spells an end to their independence. If not taken over, they will find themselves locked into joint ventures and collaboration. Car companies can at least deploy marketing expertise in the face of the overcapacity. Ford is searching for new market niches with its mini, Ka. Peugeot is giving its existing 106 small car new life with help from model lines de La Fressange ("la voiture des femmes dynamiques, descriptes et chics à la fois"). For the components companies, upon which the car groups ultimately depend, there is no such glamour ahead.

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Deutsche Telekom vows to double payout after year

Success is sweet, notes **NICHOLAS BANNISTER**

DEUTSCHE Telekom directors yesterday committed themselves to doubling the group's payout after its first full year as a quoted company and to increasing dividends in line with profit growth thereafter.

The German state telecommunications group, Europe's largest privatisation, could raise up to \$6.3 billion when it is launched at the end of next month.

The directors, in a preliminary prospectus published yesterday, said they expected to pay dividends totalling DM1.5 billion for 1996, equivalent to DM0.60 a share, and about DM3 billion for 1997.

Finance director Joachim Kröske said the board had endeavoured to ensure that the group's future development could take place from a sound financial and commercial basis.

"This achievement is underlined by our commitment to increasing divi-

dends in line with future results," he said.

The Deutsche Telekom offer is made up of 500 million new shares, representing 20 per cent of the enlarged capital. If there is adequate demand, a further 75 million new shares may be sold. The bulk of the proceeds will be used to reduce debt.

The shares are due to be quoted on eight German stock exchanges, including Frankfurt, and on the New York and Tokyo exchanges.

The group is not due to announce the initial price range for the offer until October 22, but Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, the merchant banking arm of Deutsche Bank, the offer's main coordinator, said in a report yesterday that DM20 to DM30 a share would be an appropriate price.

In sterling terms that would value Deutsche Telekom at between \$21.2 billion and \$31.8 billion. By comparison, British Telecom has a market value of \$22.6 billion.

Dr Kröske confirmed that Deutsche Telekom intended to reduce as rapidly as possible the huge debt mountain it incurred as a

result of the costly upgrading of the telecom infrastructure in former east Germany.

He said net debt had fallen by DM20 billion to DM107 billion since January 1995 and was expected to come down to DM65 billion by the year 2000.

Deutsche Telekom is forecasting an operating profit for the current year of DM6 billion in 1995. However, it claims that the 1995 figure would be nearer DM4 billion if adjusted to take account of disposals and its new obligation to pay VAT.

BZW's telecom analyst, Richard Millington, said in a report last month that the group should have little difficulty reducing debt because of its huge free cash flow.

More than two million Germans have already registered an interest in the offer, a move which will entitle them to price discounts on the first 300 shares.

The privatisation of Deutsche Telekom comes as the main European telecom markets prepare for the introduction of full competition by the start of 1998.

Eurocats



July 20 1996

The murders, the drug addiction, the muggings, the horror we experience in our beloved land... that's not the Queen is it, sitting over there!

Alec Guinness a civilized man Terry Coleman

The Observer

Kleinwort Benson claims that investment manager was dismissed 'for failing to follow instructions'

Sack for worried fund chief

Saturday Notebook

Bumpy ride on the euro express

Patrik Donovan
City Editor

A SENIOR fund manager at Kleinwort Benson yesterday claimed that he was sacked after complaining about the ethics of the leading City firm.

Mark Horn, a barrister, who managed share portfolios worth more than £250 million, told the Guardian of his "moral outrage" which prompted him to appeal repeatedly for investigations by the firm's own internal compliance department.

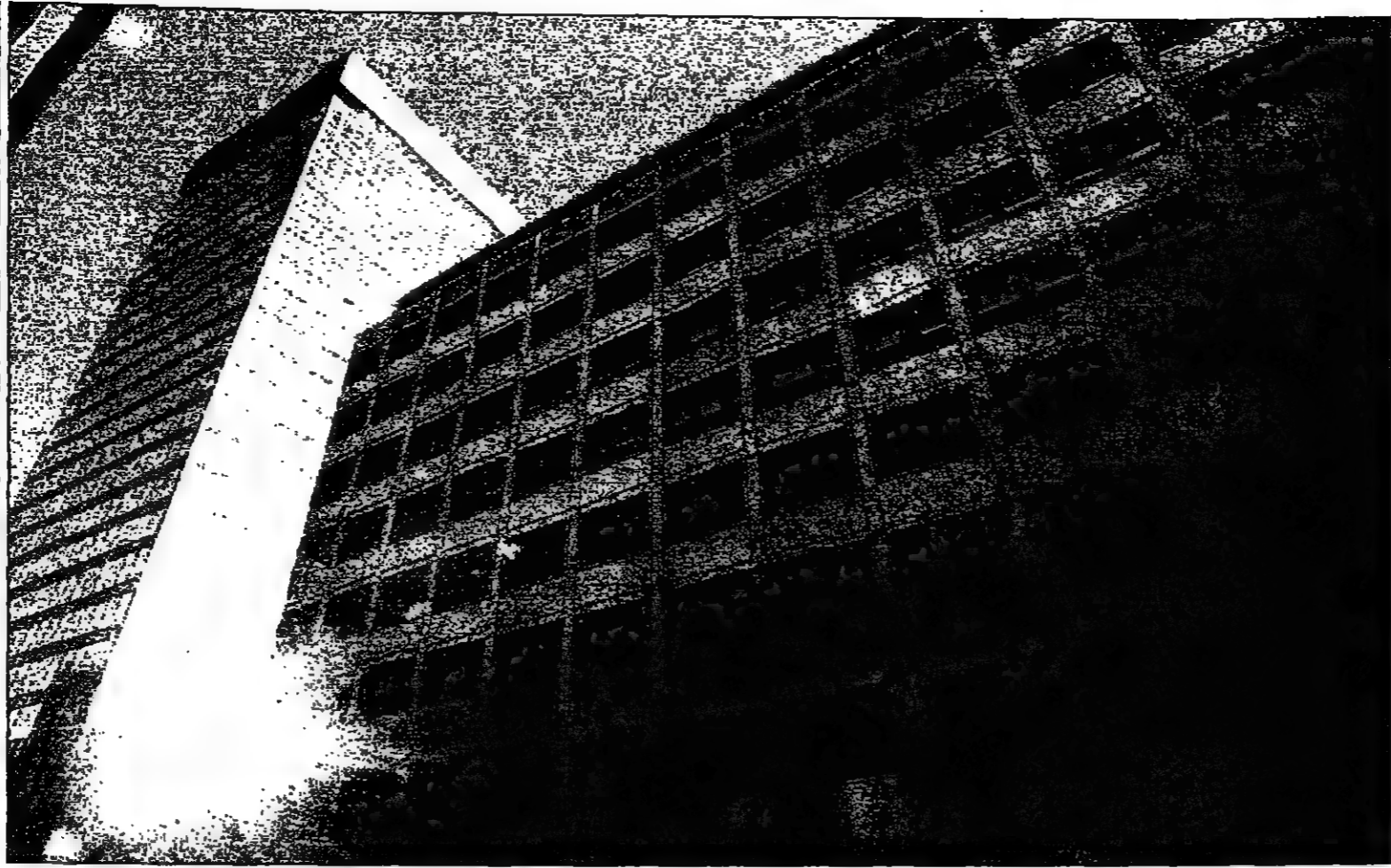
The fund manager, who worked at Kleinwort Benson Investment Management, says that his legal training made him unable to accept practices which he considered against the interests of his own clients.

Mr Horn managed the European Special Situation fund and looked after European equities investments for a number of emerging market funds managed by Kleinwort Benson, one of the financial world's biggest institutions.

Among the complaints he has lodged with the firm's compliance department are allegations that:

- The wife of a senior Kleinwort official was given "preferential" treatment in the allocation of shares in the stock market flotation of a Spanish company four months ago. He claims that this individual got around £200,000 worth of shares — more than any single financial institution.

- A group of employees bought shares in a "hot" Swedish biotechnology company when they had information not available to the rest of the market.
- Fund managers were instructed not to approach the compliance department direct, and were told that all matters of concern should be passed through a senior director.
- Complaints were made when he raised issues about



City's Chinese separation... Kleinwort's corporate finance at 20 Fenchurch Street — and next door at no 10, the fund managers PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

his own investments if they were deemed to have a negative impact on other parts of Kleinwort Benson's business. He cited comments he had made about the outlook for French privatisation.

Mr Horn said that he was unable to tolerate a situation which he felt compromised the interests of the investors in his funds. He said that his legal responsibility was to his own funds and this could not be influenced by other sides

of the business. He said City regulation obliged the bank to maintain a strict "Chinese wall" between fund management and corporate finance.

He told the Guardian: "It is an issue of corporate attitude. People are doing things which are so obviously wrong. Over the last year it is becoming more and more difficult for all of us to work there. You are employed by a firm but your prime loyalty under law is to clients."

He told the Guardian: "It is an issue of corporate attitude. People are doing things which are so obviously wrong. Over the last year it is becoming more and more difficult for all of us to work there. You are employed by a firm but your prime loyalty under law is to clients."

there was no substance to the claim. It added that Mr Horn "may" have been told that he should report any compliance concerns direct to Chief Investment Officer Brennan Horns.

A spokesman denied that there was any intention to prevent Mr Horn raising issues which worried him. He denied knowledge of complaints to the compliance department about staff shares dealing in Scandinavian stocks.



Alex Brummer

THE mad political dash by Italy, Spain and others to be part of the euro is a seductive thing. All over Europe, in the last couple of weeks, fund managers have been adjusting their portfolios and filling their boots with high-yielding Italian and Spanish bonds.

Even the London gilt market is benefiting from this bout of euro-enthusiasm, with bond prices soaring even though politically European Monetary Union is more or less taboo for the two largest parties.

The assumption post-Dublin is that EMU will go ahead and the holy grail of the single currency is there for anyone with the courage to drink from it. The same convergence which already remarkably has brought German, French and Benelux bond yields together — more than two years before exchange rates have to be locked — has begun to work its magic on Italian and Spanish bonds.

By investing now, global investors, like the international bond funds, controlled by Deutsche Bank, can enjoy the significantly higher returns and watch capital values rise as greater fiscal and monetary convergence occurs. The bond rally has now transmitted itself to the foreign exchange markets where there is a conviction that Italy will soon be moving its currency back inside the exchange rate mechanism — in preparation for decision day in early 1998.

This frenzy of activity among the Mediterranean economies, which until very recently were regarded as absolute no-hopers as bidders to be part of the first group inside the euro, is beginning to cause some ripples of excitement even in the UK — where the debate on EMU has been suppressed. The current Chancellor Kenneth Clarke, just back from Washington, has returned even more convinced about the virtues of the euro, having talked over not just with European partners but with the equally fascinated Americans, too.

LABOUR, which seeks to talk with one voice on emblematic economic issues, at the start of an intense discussion with the certain knowledge that its office will be required to take a series of decisions on the euro in 1998.

In the City, critical UK players, like UBS Phillips & Drew, are starting to warn more urgently of business draining away to the euro area as investment funds rebalance their portfolio.

But before anyone becomes carried away with the scenario of a leading group joining monetary union which includes Italy and maybe even Spain and Portugal, they should consider the consequences for the new single currency. Sure, the Italians are making a titanic effort to bring their budget within the Maastricht criteria. Having begun the process of reducing the budget deficit in the 1996 fiscal year, they are now proposing to go it full bore with a package of £41 billion

of tax increases and spending cuts — advancing their medium-term fiscal programme one year. Similarly, Spain is doing the same. So potentially, for a moment in the 1997-98 period, these two countries and others may meet the compliance criteria.

But what kind of euro will it be if the Mediterranean countries force their way in politically and diplomatically? Brussels insiders would like to see Italy inside. They don't want the European Union to be a North-South like the industrial developing world — into rich and poor segments. That is a political judgement.

Equally, the German authorities, who are far less euro-enthusiastic than their Paris or Brussels counterparts, are likely to be disdainful of a monetary union which has to accommodate the Continent's softer currencies. The guiding philosophy of the Bundesbank, which seeks to dominate the bureaucracy of the European Monetary Institute (the forerunner of the central bank) in its own backyard — is that the euro should be no weaker than the mark.

The Germans have struggled for decades, withstanding all kinds of political setbacks, to establish the mark as a bastion of stability in an inflation-prone world.

THROUGH the franc fort, which has bought France great discomfort, Paris too has bought into the philosophy of the Bundesbank. But Italy, Spain and, of course, Britain, are seen differently. While the struggle to preserve the mark and the Bundesbank has been conducted using monetary and fiscal policies, these other countries have been happy to devalue, to run above average inflation rates and pump up their economies through fiscal frivolity. One final monetary push to square inside the budget criteria does not a genuinely converging economy make. A euro based upon such contrived conditions could never be as hard as the mark and would quickly face the speculators' fury.

Investors in search of hard currencies, from Germany and elsewhere, would sweep into the Swiss franc, distorting its domestic economy and fomenting monetary chaos. There would be no virtue, under such circumstances, in being inside, and the Blair let-us-wait-and-see view would look entirely sensible.

It is hard to believe that however committed Chancellor Kohl is to the European ideal, he would allow the potential emergence of a soft euro. The experience of integrating East Germany has been searing enough. While it is hard to see the stability pact as a series of iron rules, maybe misconceived, but ensuring the euro will not be a comfortable place to be for budgetary slackers unwilling to ratchet down on deficits and pay back the accumulated national debt.

Providing Britain does not make the same mistakes of the ERM, and lock its currency in at too high a rate, then the virtue of being part of a hard, durable euro which will dominate commercial and financial transactions in Europe will make sense. But a weakly EMU, forced into being by budgetary and monetary tricks, will suffer the same fate as the other failed Euro-monetary schemes from the snake to the 1992-93 exchange rate mechanism.

Chapter of accidents continues

Bank's tarnished reputation has been dealt new blow, say Paul Murphy and Ian King

THE spectre of a senior fund manager going public with allegations of impropriety could not have come at a worse moment for an investment bank which has proved to be one of London's most accident-prone in the post-Big Bang era.

Over recent months, executives at Kleinwort Benson have displayed a new confidence, speaking of a "new spirit" with the firm finally shedding its "dead" in the wake of last year's takeover by Germany's second largest bank, Dresdner.

Others are not so sure. As one former Kleinwort executive said yesterday: "It has never been a tightly-managed sort of place. They have a few very good people there, but there are too few of them."

Kleinwort Benson — viewed as one of the strongest and most prestigious City institutions at its birth in 1986 — was laid low three years later after suffering disastrous losses in its market-making division. Large numbers of staff had to be laid off.

A long and careful recovery programme was capped by last year's takeover. On the corporate finance and broking side of the group, confidence is said to have grown substantially since an embarrassing eight-month

period during 1993, when the firm was trying to find a new chief executive to replace Jonathan Agnew, who had quit. The job was finally filled with the promotion of two men, Sir Nicholas Redmayne and David Clement, to the position of joint chief executives for investment banking. Colin Malby was retained as chief executive of investment

management, with Lord Rockley heading the group as executive chairman. New business, in the form of mandates to handle large international cash raising exercises and flotations, began to flow in.

In June of last year, Kleinwort's investment management division was given another shake-up, with Sir Nicholas taking on Mr Malby's responsibilities. Mr Malby left the group.

Sir Nicholas admitted at the time that investment management had lagged in the recovery experienced by Kleinwort's other divisions — notably international banking.

While progress at the investment management division remained slow, the group as a whole began to move back up the rankings of

'They have a few very good people there but there are too few of them'

However, the group has still had problems with the poor performance of some of its own investment vehicles — most notably, the Kleinwort European Privatisation Investment Trust.

It was sold as an investment vehicle for European privatisation issues to a hungry public in 1994. But by early this year, a poor investment performance had caused Kleinwort to launch an elaborate share buy-back plan.

A number of rival fund managers immediately came up with some alternative plans, with the TR European Growth fund actually launching what was a hostile buy-back.

TREG was seen off just recently, but Kleinwort's reputation as a money manager had already suffered another sharp blow.

There will always be demands for better performance, but they should never be allowed to jeopardise the safety of investors.

In the past 18 months it has become increasingly evident that standards, in some financial houses, may have slipped. When Barings was forced into Administration in February 1995 it was discovered that Barings fund management companies had broken through the Chinese walls and deposited cash with the bank.

More recently a fund manager at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell was given the freedom to spin his own web of companies in three European trusts, opening up a £290 million chasm. Bad Morgan Grenfell had already suffered another sharp blow.

Commentary

BRITISH fund managers have long enjoyed a reputation for probity and integrity. As increasing numbers of investors, including those making retirement plans, entrust their savings to these managers, there needs to be absolute confidence that the system will not be abused.

Chinese walls between the managers and their investment banking counterparts must be maintained; compliance strictly and fairly enforced and the funds managed prudently.

There will always be demands for better performance, but they should never be allowed to jeopardise the safety of investors.

Investors need to be secure in the knowledge that fund managers are acting in their interests, rather than those of other clients, shareholders or interested parties.

Our disclosures today about the hurried departure of a senior fund manager at Kleinwort Benson raises issues about the workings of Chinese walls.

It is of course irritating for a corporate finance department if its counterpart in fund management raises public or private questions about the quality of a privatisation. But that is their right.

Similarly, it may be embarrassing if a fund manager official raises compliance questions involving a major family shareholder. Even if the questions raised turn out to be wide of the mark, that is no reason to undermine the questioner's position.

Were such people listened to more carefully, some of the serious problems seen in the City's investment banks in recent years might have been headed off.

The Kleinwort Benson case is symptomatic of a willingness in the City to sweep problems under the carpet rather than bring them to the attention of regulators or address fundamental issues of ethics.

Investors need to be secure in the knowledge that fund managers are acting in their interests, rather than those of other clients, shareholders or interested parties.

Casino operator Stakis becomes front-runner for Lonrho's Metropole chain with £300m bid

Dominic Walsh and Ian King

STAKIS, the Glasgow-based hotel and casino operator, is believed to be preparing a bid of up to \$300 million for Lonrho's Metropole Hotels chain.

Stakis, which recently signalled its ambition to expand its British conference hotel activities, is expected to participate in the deal through a substantial rights issue.

Until a few days ago the favourite to buy the five conference hotels was stock market newcomer Millennium & Copthorne Hotels, the group controlled by Singaporean billionaire Kwek Leng Beng. However, it is understood that Millennium's interest has cooled, and that it is now in negotiations to buy London's Britannia Inter-Continental Hotel for more than £70 million.

Hotel staff set to share £3m

HUNDREDS of hotel staff, including chefs and kitchen workers, are set to receive over £3 million worth of shares and share options when Principal Hotels, the three- and four-star hotel operator, comes to market later this year, writes Ian King.

Principal, which is expected to be valued at over £100 million at flotation, is making the shares and options available to employees as part of an incentive scheme.

Around 50 hotel managers are also set to pocket up to £100,000 each following the flotation. A spokesman for Principal, which published its pathfinder prospectus yesterday, said the company was "determined" that as many long-term employees would benefit from the flotation as possible.

At the flotation, Principal's management will retain between 7 and 9 per cent of the company's shares.

call on existing shareholders to stump up at least £150 million through a rights issue, with the balance of the purchase price in debt.

There is no doubt that such a deal would go down pretty well, said one analyst. "The only qualms I have are that Stakis could have got Copthorne Hotels for £215 million a year ago, whereas now it looks likely to pay at least £270 million for Metropole."

Another market-watcher said the strengthening of the group's hotel business was a wise move in view of the disappointing performance of its casino business over the past two years. It is still searching for a new casino boss after the "early retirement" of former head Jim McCarroll, announced in June.

"The only negative against David Michels is that the casino division was allowed to underperform for too long. Over the past two years casinos have consistently failed to meet expectations, while hotels have done better than expected," he said.

Brent agrees buyer for Pubmaster chain

Lisa Buckingham

BRENT Walker, the debt-stricken leisure group, yesterday announced that it had whittled the list of potential candidates for its 1,670-strong Pubmaster chain down to one preferred bidder.

The company refused to identify the chosen bidder, but market speculation centred on Pubmaster's former chief executive, John Brackenbury, in conjunction with NatWest Ventures.

It is understood that talks could be complete before the end of next month, with industry sources suggesting a price of about £150 million. This is higher than the company indicated it wanted but higher than many analysts' estimates of £130 million.

The pub chain increased sales by nearly 11 per cent and profits by a similar amount to £8.9 million in the first half of the year — far higher than most observers had expected. The improved performance was partly attributed to the company's "churn and invest" policy which involves selling poorly performing outlets to reduce debts.

Proceeds from the sale — which is expected to raise about £40 million more than the alternative of a flotation — will be distributed to the group's lenders. The group's William Hill betting chain is also on the market.

Progress on the pub sale comes shortly after Brent won a High Court injunction to prevent its founder and former chairman, George Walker, from attempting to wind up the group.

'...the murders, the drug addiction, the muggings, the horrors we experience in our beloved land... that's not the Queen is it, sitting over there?'

Aleo Guinness takes a civilised lunch with Terry Coleman

The Observer

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 1.82	France 7.8440	Italy 2.333	Singapore 2.150
Austria 18.36 <th>Germany 2.3250</th> <td>Malta 0.5500<td>South Africa 8.89</td></td>	Germany 2.3250	Malta 0.5500 <td>South Africa 8.89</td>	South Africa 8.89
Belgium 47.81 <td>Greece 368.50</td> <td>Netherlands 2.8125</td> <td>Spain 195.00</td>	Greece 368.50	Netherlands 2.8125	Spain 195.00
Canada 2.0765 <td>Hong Kong 11.80</td> <td>New Zealand 2.1775<td>Sweden 10.20</td></td>	Hong Kong 11.80	New Zealand 2.1775 <td>Sweden 10.20</td>	Sweden 10.20
Cyprus 0.7065 <td>India 55.75</td> <td>Norway 8.8460</td> <td>Switzerland 1.9200</td>	India 55.75	Norway 8.8460	Switzerland 1.9200
Denmark 6.8525 <td>Ireland 0.8510</td> <td>Portugal 258.00</td> <td>Turkey 138.651</td>	Ireland 0.8510	Portugal 258.00	Turkey 138.651
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Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
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Finance Guardian

DAVID GOW sees Jamaica trying to shed its old image



The sparkling beaches, the slums of 'Gully Town', a Kingston market and jeans manufacture for a US company superimposed against island hope. Rasta Luciano's CD MONTAGE: LIZ COULDFIELD/KATZ

Just a little respect

ONEAL, an 18-year-old water-sports attendant at a coastal resort hotel, which nestles among the tamarinds, is clear about the change he wants in Jamaica. "Yes man, attitude—I mean, the attitude of those drug guys down in Kingston, blaming poverty for all the crime and violence. It's wrong, man. It's lack of education and caring, lack of respect for others, that's the problem." It's an uncanny echo of Sir Howard Cooke, country-boy turned Governor General, who wants a new moral crusade. Blaming urbanisation for the social unrest that has brought over 600 murders this year so far, he says: "When I go down to Trench Town [the innermost estate immortalised by Bob Marley and now a no-go area] what do I see. I see the poor cheating the poor, preventing the poor from going to work, and vandalism destroying people's homes. Poverty is caused by the have-nots themselves, not by the haves. The poor want respect and recognition, in a word, identity." Gordon "Butch" Stewart, the island's most successful entrepreneur, is clear in his mind, too. Sitting open-shirted in his luxury office in dilapidated, downtown Kingston, he cheerfully declares: "We come out of a culture in which everything that happens, the government has to do it. I think more and more communities realise that if they're going to get ahead they will have to do it on their own."

It's a bold message for a country in which the common form of greeting is "Respect, man. Maximum." And, moreover, for an island of 2.5 million people living for the most part in seas of poverty surrounded by lands of unfathomable natural resources and beauty. But it's probably an unrealistic target for a country where, in this week alone, there were several murders, a run on one bank and the freezing of the personal assets of the chairman of another that was taken into administration three months ago. Attempting to cope with this financial crisis is P.J. Patterson, the calm, competent premier. An ex-lawyer, ex-manager of a reggae band, he is clear-sighted about the road ahead. "We are now at the stage where earlier this year we completed, after 18 long years, the borrowing relationship with the IMF. We now have an economy that is poised for self-sustaining growth because we have laid some foundations for economic stability." The Jamaican dollar has recently stabilised at around 35 to the US currency, after bouching 41 earlier this year. But this has been largely because of a tight monetary policy, designed to reduce inflation to the bottom-end of the government target range of between 11 and 15 per cent—and built upon interest rates of nearly 50 per cent that have virtually squeezed out investment and are only now coming down. The Jamaican economy may be stagnant, but Mr Patterson, architect of a 5-point industrial policy geared at doubling GDP

per head to US\$4,000 (£2,667) a year by 2010, foresees a return to 9 per cent growth next year. A more sceptical Dunbar McFarlane, managing director of the National Commercial Bank group, the island's biggest, believes there may just be scope for debt-ridden firms to return slowly to the capital market but he's more worried about crime and violence, drugs and guns. And then there is unemployment, officially at a mere 15 per cent, in a country where most people either hang loose at the roadside or are self-employed. Like the small coffee-farmer "making a few pictures", Miss Pat, the Rasta stall-holder selling individual cigarettes and reciting Proverbs, to the girls who ply their trade on the north coast highway. At the heart of the matter is the problem of culture that so annoys Oneal, restless in his determination to get on—like the young, predominantly white American couples he serves. Jamaicans, blessed with an enviable elegance and charm, are resistant to change. "Soon come", after all, is another favourite greeting. Sticky, who works on a section of one of the island's biggest banana plantations at St Mary's, hopes the pending changes in working practices will be delayed until she retires at 65, after a lifetime working in sugar, tobacco and now bananas. With her mud-encrusted dress, fastened at the open bodice with a pin, she smiles her toothless grin as, in sweltering heat, she grades, with caliper and tape, the right

bananas for the boxes that will be shipped that same night to the UK. "It's skilled work of a semi-primitive, back-breaking nature that pays around US\$10 a day for a picker easing down a cluster of 140 bananas with his machete." But, under pressure from the "dollar" banana growers of Central and Latin America, Sticky's team will have to be more efficient, maybe earn less—and see the overall 1,250-strong workforce cut to 900 next year. "We have to enact a complete change of culture here," says Jimmy Brahm, agricultural manager. "These people offer themselves for a work three-and-a-half days a week and so we're laying on transport from the villages to try and instil a five-day working mentality." For Marshall Hall, chief executive of Jamaican Producers, the plantation owner, the drive to reduce costs and improve productivity among Sticky and her team is just one element of a wider Jamaican struggle to stay afloat.

domestic and commercial offensive is designed to wipe out Jamaican and other Caribbean producers. Already, he says, efforts to enter US markets are thwarted because customs leave Jamaican ships unloaded on the pretext of finding marijuana. "The US wants the right to chase drugs traffickers within our waters and that's a vital matter of sovereignty. But, if they go on attacking our banana industry, drugs may well become the alternative crop," Mr Hall says. Mr Patterson, the island's premier, shares the same underlying, if less apocalyptic, concerns since drug-related crime deters both investors and tourists. A money-laundering bill aimed at traffickers' incomes is at committee stage in parliament, while seizures are at a record high. But, says Mr Patterson, the central issue is to negotiate a reciprocal deal with the US under which combined efforts to control drug-trafficking in Jamaican and the wider east Caribbean waters will be matched by greater American readiness to stop the illegal export of guns to Jamaica. Beyond that, he wants the wider Caribbean community to work with Canada and Mexico, the US's partners in the North American free trade area, to emasculate Helms-Burton in the run-up to achieving a hemispheric free trade area by 2005. "So we can stake our claim in the global economy on a fair footing." Whether the negotiating team dispatched by the Jamaican cabinet to Washington this week can achieve even a iota of this is doubtful.

Wind of change sweeps island, with a nod to Bond legacy

TWO indigenous entrepreneurs, one a highly visible buccaner, the other a laid-back musician, have set their hearts on giving Jamaica its stake in the global economy and a share of prosperity and stability. Chris Blackwell and Gordon "Butch" Stewart, the swashbuckler, started off humbly—the former selling Island-label records from the back of his Mini Cooper in London; the latter starting up a small firm distributing and servicing air conditioners. Both are now seriously rich but, more importantly, visionaries and philanthropists of a kind virtually extinct in the UK. Mr Blackwell, since he sold a substantial minority stake in the London end of Island Records to Polygram for \$300 million, has remained a big player in the international music scene via bands like UB40, the Cranberries and the Gypsy Kings and, in Jamaica, with new reggae kings like the Rasta Luciano. But, meanwhile, he has set up myriad companies, including Island Outpost which runs hotels in Miami, the Bahamas and Jamaica. The latest jewels in the Blackwell crown are



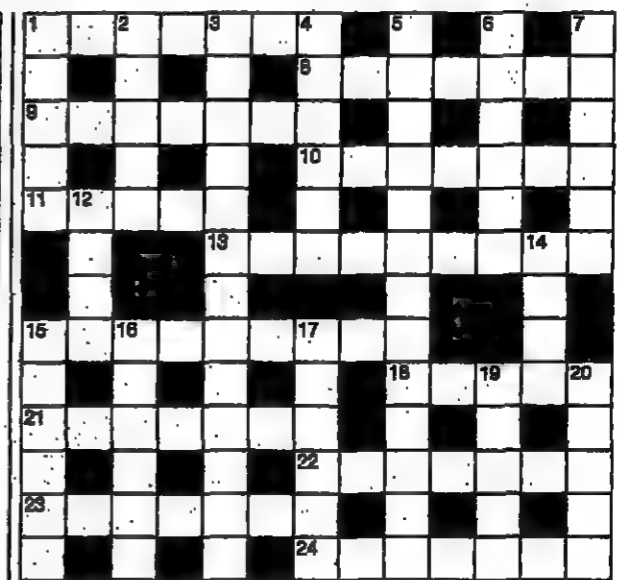
Strawberry Hill, a "boutique" hotel of exclusive villas set in the Blue Mountains above Kingston, and Goldeneye, Ian Fleming's magnificent house on the northern coast at Oracabessa. It is Goldeneye, his private home, that most encapsulates Mr Blackwell's vision. He wants to turn Oracabessa, a rundown port, into a Jamaican Port-au-Prince or model village. Goldeneye itself will gradually be opened to an exclusive "club" of fee-paying guests. They will stay in designer "huts," (sumptuous wooden villas). But Mr Blackwell's vision is to redesign what is now, unsurprisingly, called James Bond beach and spread the associated prosperity up to the village. "The only way we can make this work is if the local community supports and benefits from it... So we will not open any shops, for instance, that compete with ones already there." He is helping to re-equip the local school and rebuild the police station. If Mr Blackwell is the

lar fell from 19 to 31 against the US greenback, he hit on what he freely admits was a great marketing ploy. As a huge earner of foreign exchange he offered to put \$1 million (£850,000) into the system at a rate of 25 to 1. The ploy, backed up by even more reserves, worked, undermining a thriving black market and, if only temporarily, stabilising the domestic currency. Then, in December 1994, he bought a 47 per cent stake in the clapped-out state carrier, Air Jamaica, and became its chairman. "The planes were dirty, the upholstery terrible. Flights so late it wasn't even worth talking about on-time performance," he says. "And we had \$1.9 million on deposit with the American customs for drug seizures." Today, after reimagining the airline and buying half a dozen new aircraft, Air Jamaica may still be in debt, but is now trading profitably. Mr Stewart, with a Knightsbridge townhouse, is now owner of Jamaica's largest private corporation, but he cheerily waves away questions about his Crusoe-like fortune. Mr Blackwell is even more wary, allowing his managers to talk only of multi-million investment programmes. But, as Jamaica struggles against social and economic instability, both these patriots are investing their money—and even their souls—in the island's future.

'The only way this can work is if the local community benefits from it'

Quick Crossword No. 8249

CONVIVIAL C
V A I D O L O
C A P R I C O R N
L V T O D D N
E O T O P I O I
L O I T E R T A U R U S
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A I I O V I T I O
T R A A H I L I T
I R A D V E R S A R Y
O N Y C R I I
R E S W A T S H O P



- Across**
1 Bestowed, enriched (7)
8 Accomplish (7)
9 Fortiveness (7)
10 Lionlike (7)
11 Intermediate place, West Indian dance (5)
13 Fatigue (5)
14 Etching (9)
15 Beverage (5)
21 Without breaks—without brakes? (7)
22 Lashed (7)

- Down**
1 Artist's stand (5)
2 Vision (5)
3 Famous china tableware decoration (6,7)
4 Flower (5)
5 Disease, esp. of children (6,5)
6 Foul—pass (5)
7 Holiday—nook (5)

- 12 Smooth—driver? (4)**
14 Fodder storage (4)
15 Castrated man (6)
16 Sex (5)
17 Hamper (5)
19 Ascend (5)
20 Representative (5)

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A FENCE

The MALT

The MACALLAN
RANKS AS ONE OF MAN'S MORE
ENDURING ACCOMPLISHMENTS
AND, IN PACIFYING THE MOST
DEMANDING PALATES, IT STANDS
ALONE AS *The MALT*

Supplied by

the week



PHOTOGRAPH BY GRAHAM TURNER

ME and me

The eighties were a sick decade. Yuppies were falling ill with a mystery disease. Doctors were sceptical and the rest of us unsympathetic. Now medicine has recognised the illness. **Martin Jacques** looks back at his fight with a malady they said was imaginary

Perhaps I was a true kid of the 1960s. Of course, if I had been told that 10 years ago, I would have reacted with some vigour. "Me? Come off it. Editor of Marxism Today and living on poverty wages. It doesn't fit. Think again."

OK, let's think again. In 1977 I became editor of Marxism Today, an obscure and irrelevant magazine with no money, no staff, no presence and an absurd title. Slowly it began to make waves, little ones at first and then great big ones. I refused to be deterred by the numbing constraints of money and title, in fact in a perverse way they made it even more of a challenge.

Then in late February 1983, I started to feel under the weather. Nothing in particular, just an odd bunch of symptoms which meant most of the time I felt distinctly off-colour. I ignored them and ploughed on. I was in my mid-30s

and I had never been seriously ill. I had always worked incredibly hard. I thought of myself as indestructible.

After several weeks, I went to see my doctor. I explained to him the various symptoms — tiredness, dizziness, numbness and what have you. He sent me for a blood test which revealed nothing. He didn't seem too bothered and didn't suggest I eased up. When I asked him what he thought it was, he mumbled something about "post-viral fatigue syndrome", which meant nothing to me but which was, in the light of later attempts by the medical profession to diagnose my condition, to prove a remarkably good judgment.

I carried on working, refusing to concede an inch to a body that was trying to tell me something different. I slowly went downhill. Everything became an enormous struggle. I felt permanently shattered, I got aches and pains in vari-

ous limbs for no obvious reason. I often felt sick. I always felt ill. Eventually, bit by bit, I began to concede. I got up later and later, I went to bed earlier and earlier until finally I gave in and spent a week in bed.

The thing, my illness, my constant companion, had at last got the better of me. I stopped. I rested. I was given a full-scale examination at the rheumatology department of the Middlesex Hospital and told to stay at home for two weeks and take it easy. Slowly I began to feel better. By the early autumn I was back to normal.

ME, post-viral fatigue syndrome, chronic fatigue syndrome — as the latest report published this week by the Royal College of Physicians prefers to call it — changed my life. The college said that the condition **page 14**

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the week that was

Us on us

The British view

Shattered Wilmsham MP Neil Hamilton is battling to save his career and home after his humiliating climbdown in the "libel battle of the century".

It is a personal tragedy for Ms Mandy Allwood that she has lost all of the eight babies she was expecting.

The Seagulls have now hit rock-bottom. They are at the very foot of the entire football league.

The Seagulls have now hit rock-bottom. They are at the very foot of the entire football league and after last night's pitch invasion they could well lose a further three points as punishment.

Them on them

The global view

Unable to bear her loss any longer, Muhammad Toftuzuddin, a 55-year-old man, dug up his wife's grave the other day and brought home her skull and skeleton.

The State Law and Order Council's (SLO) leaders evidently believe they can get away with anything and survive whatever retribution will result from its latest brutality.

Besides, the strong political support... as well as the inability of the world at large to enforce democratic reforms in Burma have given SLO the strength to remain arrogant and intransigent.

The 104th Congress is over. The Republicans claimed to be acting in the broad public interest when in fact they often were practicing no more than old-style, interest-group politics.

Justice in black and white

This week last year October 3 1995

THE COURT clerk read out the not guilty verdicts. OJ Simpson grinned triumphantly. After a nine-month trial, he had been acquitted of the murder of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend Ronald Goldman.



OJ is innocent. But not in the white world

America was divided, almost exactly along racial lines. White America was dismayed. President Clinton issued a cautious statement noting that "our system of justice requires respect for this decision".

The stark divisions that the trial revealed brought black America a new political energy. That same month, Louis Farrakhan organised the Million Man March on Washington.

Neighbors erected signs calling him the "Brentwood Butcher". The public was hostile, and within weeks Barbieri had dumped him.

Simpson's status as black hero speaks volumes for the state of race relations in America. Until his arrest, he was an honorary white living in affluent Brentwood.

That world, however, was not prepared to readmit him. Neighbors erected signs calling him the "Brentwood Butcher". The public was hostile, and within weeks Barbieri had dumped him.

Should Mrs DB, whose case has been in the High Court, be allowed to have a child using her dead husband's sperm?

The fact that this woman can give permission for her husband's kidneys and other organs to be used by other people, while not being able to have his sperm for her own use shows the absurdity of the situation.

The child has a right to have a father but with posthumous conception that right is not going to be respected.

Whether he is found innocent or guilty (in which case he will have to pay compensation) it is unlikely that the same scenes will erupt.

By this time, I knew from my own rather rich experience that three things seemed to make me particularly vulnerable: a very long period of incredibly hard and stressful work, the immediate period after flu or a bad cold, and sport, which I did a lot of.

ME and me

ME exists, though it should not be called ME for various technical reasons. ME or no ME, as far as I was concerned, from the moment I suffered it I had a new respect for my body.

Hard work was one of the motifs of the decade. It was personified in the occupant of Number 10, a workaholic who barely slept, rarely took a holiday and worked ceaselessly. The message of the decade was that success depended on individual ability and hard work.

With hard work went the belief that we were indestructible. Any sign of weakness, of an inability to cope with being a workaholic was interpreted as failure, as an indication that we couldn't hack it in the new competitive society.

ME, as we came to know it then, sat uncomfortably with the new zeitgeist. It was a mysterious disease that seemed, above all, to strike at the young and successful, leaving them hopelessly fatigued and quite unable to cope with the Stokhanovite demands of the period.

ME, in other words, struck at the heart of the new culture, at the very groups that came to personify it. Newspapers were filled with articles about the strange new affliction. ME support groups sprang into life. By the end of the decade it seemed, every middle class family knew someone who was suffering from the disease.

ME or no ME, as far as I was concerned, from the moment I suffered it I had a new respect for my body. I listened to it, I changed my diet. Whenever I felt the symptoms returning, which periodically they did, I tried to rest immediately. But even then, I refused to accept that my condition had anything to do with overwork.

Hard work was one of the motifs of the decade. It was personified in the occupant of Number 10, a workaholic who barely slept, rarely took a holiday and worked ceaselessly. The message of the decade was that success depended on individual ability and hard work. Performance-related pay, entrepreneurial endowments and individual contracts were integral to the new philosophy. We were told it and, most powerfully of all, we internalised it: the result was a profound cultural shift.

With hard work went the belief that we were indestructible. Any sign of weakness, of an inability to cope with being a workaholic was interpreted as failure, as an indication that we couldn't hack it in the new competitive society. To work all hours was to be macho, to flunk it was to be a wimp.

ME, as we came to know it then, sat uncomfortably with the new zeitgeist. It was a mysterious disease that seemed, above all, to strike at the young and successful, leaving them hopelessly fatigued and quite unable to cope with the Stokhanovite demands of the period.

ME, in other words, struck at the heart of the new culture, at the very groups that came to personify it. Newspapers were filled with articles about the strange new affliction. ME support groups sprang into life. By the end of the decade it seemed, every middle class family knew someone who was suffering from the disease.

On countless occasions I was phoned by fellow-sufferers desperate for help or just conversation. They wanted to talk, they needed to be heard in a social environment which was unsympathetic to a condition which looked like at worst shirking and at best an inability to cope. The medical profession was of little help, unable to explain the disease and therefore inclined to dismiss it with a shrug.

My second encounter changed the way I thought in a way that the first did not. As on the previous occasion, I changed my diet and started popping some health pills. But this time I accepted that the sheer volume and intensity of my work must have had something to do with my condition.



The battle goes on... for Emily Rantzen (left). Novelist Clare Francis has also fought with the disease

By this time, I knew from my own rather rich experience that three things seemed to make me particularly vulnerable: a very long period of incredibly hard and stressful work, the immediate period after flu or a bad cold, and sport, which I did a lot of. Any two of these three was liable to trigger the symptoms.

Since 1987 the symptoms have recurred from time to time and sometimes they have stayed around for a week or two, obliging me to rest a little. But ME, or whatever you want to call it, has not visited me again as on those two previous occasions.

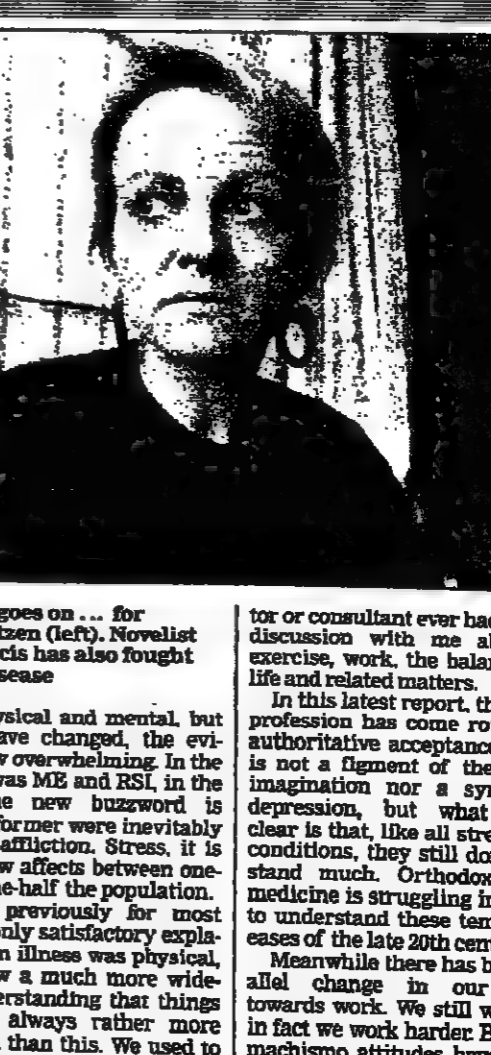
and life has subtly changed. There is more of a balance, I'm less reckless, I listen to my body, I use the brakes, I occasionally take the scenic route. I manage myself. ME was a new kind of disease, a creature of our time and an authentic product of the eighties. The report by the Royal College of Physicians is surely right to suggest that it is both physical and mental. With the increased intensity of work, the decline of certainty, the rise of insecurity, the transformed condition of the middle class, then it is hardly surprising that diseases which are both physical and stress-related are becoming commonplace. In the eighties, society found it hard to accept the idea that illness could



The battle goes on... for Emily Rantzen (left). Novelist Clare Francis has also fought with the disease

be both physical and mental, but attitudes have changed, the evidence is now overwhelming. In the eighties it was ME and RSI, in the nineties the new buzzword is stress. The former were inevitably a minority affliction. Stress, it is claimed, now affects between one-third and one-half the population. Whereas previously for most people the only satisfactory explanation for an illness was a wide-spread understanding that things are almost always rather more complicated than this. We used to think of illness in terms of the doctor or, more seriously, the hospital. Now we are aware that our health is about life more generally, that we ourselves can materially affect how long we live and how clear the quality of our environment, stress-management and a balanced life.

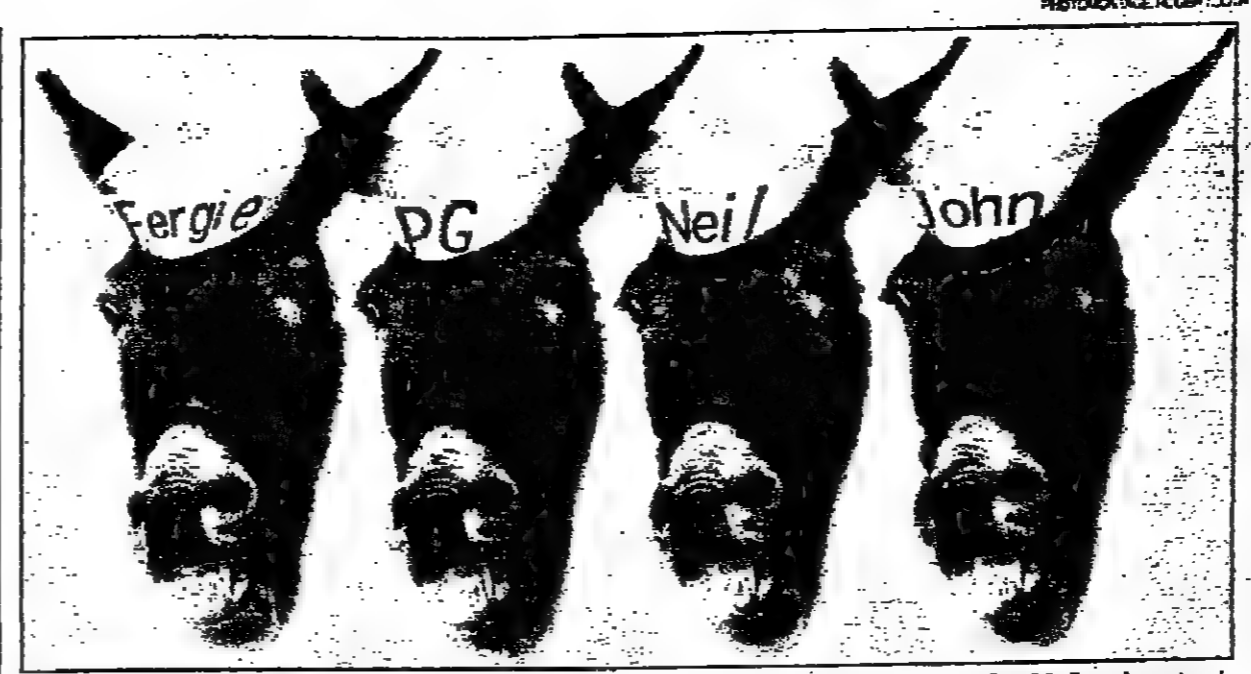
Our attitude towards the medical profession has changed as a consequence. When I first got ME, I expected a rapid diagnosis and, hopefully, a similarly rapid cure. In fact what I painfully learnt in 1983 and 1987 were the limitations of the medical profession. As they didn't know what it was, they couldn't test for it, so they looked for other things instead which they could test for. With one exception, no doc-



The battle goes on... for Emily Rantzen (left). Novelist Clare Francis has also fought with the disease

tor or consultant ever had a serious discussion with me about diet, exercise, work, the balance of my life and related matters. In this latest report, the medical profession has come round to an authoritative acceptance that ME is not a figment of the patient's imagination nor a symptom of depression, but what remains clear is that, like all stress-related conditions, they still don't understand much. Orthodox western medicine is struggling in its effort to understand these template diseases of the late 20th century. Meanwhile there has been a parallel change in our attitude towards work. We still work hard, in fact we work harder. But the old machismo attitudes have receded. We work hard not because we believe that it will necessarily deliver great personal success but because we have to, it is a question of personal survival in an era of downsizing and global competition.

The role-model is no longer the yuppie who spends all his time working but the person who knows how to live a more balanced existence. The mad workaholic has given way to the downshifter and the suggestion that we should leave work on time. A true kid of the 1990s? The editor of Marxism Today? Of course I was. Ten years later I have imbued a more holistic attitude towards my body and my life: a picture of good health. Very nineties.



There is no evidence that the Ass, Equus Asinus, is more stupid than any other member of the horse family.

The Duchess of York's calamitous life as an ass, laid bare by a psychic advisor who certainly knew what was coming to Fergie but didn't tell her — i.e. that she was taping all her client's intimacies — led the Sun newspaper to continue the livestock analogies. "Would you rather date Fergie or a goat?" the paper asked readers, leaving no doubt that it considered a

goat both cleverer and more attractive. The former trade minister Neil Hamilton's claim to assume status ceased to be a matter of legal argument during the week, but it did overshadow the story of the original Agent Bond, a magnificent ass, as further newly-released files revealed. Bond was a spy working for the Soviets in London, and infuriated his Moscow controllers by sending back a set of espionage photos out of focus. The not-special-though-agent has never been identified beyond his code name; a paragon amongst asses.

John Jones, the photographer who admitted his hopeless photos of the wedding of postal worker Barry Small and his bride Jill were "not his best day's work" explained in his defence that the Smalls had been "unavailable and unco-operative". It seemed a case of pure ass-

hood on Mr Jones's part, yet in the picture accompanying press coverage of the affair the Smalls did look a little truculent. There again, the photograph was taken by Mr Jones, so there's no knowing. A warning of the fate awaiting asses was provided by the former TV game show host Ted Rogers, who the Daily Mail discovered, was living in rented accommodation having lost his money and flash lifestyle after his show, 3-2-1, was axed in 1988. "Tory Ted it was who, warm? Thatcher at a Solihull election meeting in 1987, told a hilarious joke about the new form of neutron bomb, designed to stink out enemies without damaging property it was, he quipped to a stony-faced audience consisting of large numbers of local Asian Conservatives, the Pakistani Curry Bomb. Jonathan Margolis

HAVE YOU BEEN PAYING ATTENTION ?

- 1. Who said: "My book isn't all sexual little-tattle." (a) Madame Vasse (b) Allan Starke (c) Margaret Atwood

- 2. Which Conservative MP was fined £3,000?

- 3. Evidence revealed Neanderthals were wiped out by: (a) ME (b) Salmonella (c) A rhinovirus

- 4. Who will have to wrap up warm for his latest adventure?

- 5. Who is this? (a) Eric Cantona (b) Sharon Stone (c) Ted Hughes (d) Wieslawa Skrzypniak

- 6. "Where is the heart? Who is the man? These are questions with many answers." Which poet wrote these lines? (a) Eric Cantona (b) Sharon Stone (c) Ted Hughes (d) Wieslawa Skrzypniak

- 7. Road rage, fantasy football, ethnic cleansing and date rape. Where did these occur for the first time? (a) Eric Cantona (b) Sharon Stone (c) Ted Hughes (d) Wieslawa Skrzypniak

- 8. "That man is so German." Whose perceptive description of Helmut Kohl? (a) The Duchess of York (b) Lady Thatcher (c) Madame Vasse

- 9. Which party animal's mouth is this? (a) Eric Cantona (b) Sharon Stone (c) Ted Hughes (d) Wieslawa Skrzypniak

- 10. Who had a magnificent seven? (a) Eric Cantona (b) Sharon Stone (c) Ted Hughes (d) Wieslawa Skrzypniak

- 11. Whose one-to-nine included a "oreep and a bastard", a man who "ruined my life", and a dreamboat American? (a) Eric Cantona (b) Sharon Stone (c) Ted Hughes (d) Wieslawa Skrzypniak

- 12. Who had 10 votes for 1,000 days? (a) Eric Cantona (b) Sharon Stone (c) Ted Hughes (d) Wieslawa Skrzypniak

- 13. According to a poll, who was the top holiday heart-throb among teenage girls? (a) Eric Cantona (b) Sharon Stone (c) Ted Hughes (d) Wieslawa Skrzypniak

- 14. "I'm not interested in being Wonder Woman in the delivery room. Give me drugs." Who? (a) Eric Cantona (b) Sharon Stone (c) Ted Hughes (d) Wieslawa Skrzypniak

- 15. "Under Labour women will become more promiscuous. That's an election pledge." Who coined this vote-winner? (a) Barbara Castle (b) Clare Short (c) Janet Anderson

Answers on the back page

October 1996

Advertisement for 'Out' magazine. Includes text: 'is head of the Pr...', 'Out', 'love him or hate him.', 'his the only choice'.

As head of the Prison Governors Association, Chris Scott is locking horns with Michael Howard

Outcry from the inside

THE JOANNA COLES INTERVIEW



CHRIS SCOTT is not a celebrity, he's not an actor or an author pretending to shun publicity while desperately trying to flog a film. He is just someone who longs to bring the public to his front door and show them the reality behind the image.

The problem is that the public do not want to come. For Chris Scott is a prison governor and not many of us care to know what's really going on behind bars.

Imagine, for just one second, that you are Chris Scott, governor of Featherstone Prison, near Wolverhampton and chairman of the Prison Governors' Association. Imagine that you have 664 men on varying charges of grievous bodily harm, armed robbery, drug dealing, burglary, rape and murder, locked up in a low-rise brick settlement billowing with razor wire and originally designed to house 450.

Imagine too, that you know the prison population is rising by 1,000 men a month, and that several times a week you are phoned and begged to take more prisoners when you know you don't have room. On top of this, you are also having your budget cut.

Not just cut, slashed. Though your prison population is rising, you must find savings of £2.3 million over the next three years — a total saving of 13.3 per cent. "I would like to train some of my officers in detoxification of drugs, but we don't have the money," says Scott flatly. "And I've cut back on education. I've not totally dented it, though that would be a big temptation. But there are no evening classes now, most of my education is geared towards qualifications and basic literacy. I had hoped to make savings through voluntary redundancy but fewer than I expected have taken it up."

Then of course, there's the day-to-day stuff, the prison factory, the two prison farms, catering and laundry, the 330 staff, sentence planning, financial meetings and the endless applications for temporary leave which, according to new regulations, you can no longer delegate to a deputy governor, you have to approve yourself. And though you have six deputies one is leaving today and you cannot afford to replace him. Oh, and at the end of each year your total earnings amount to £24,000 a year.

But Chris Scott didn't enter the prison service to make money, nor for the thrill of shouting "Lock up" and slamming a metal door. Up until the age of 30 he was a Catholic priest working in inner-city Birmingham who, under the old fast-track recruiting system, entered the prison service as a deputy governor.

Disillusioned with the church, he joined the prison service because it offered "a secure career with people. Management With A Social Purpose, that was the advert at the time. My first posting was to Dartmoor. Rather a shock actually. It was just like Acatraz."

"Twenty-three years on and his own prison, Featherstone, built in the seventies, is not a bit like Acatraz. It is, according to the placard stuck on the front gate, an Opportunities Prison" a particularly splendid mission statement given that the chief opportunity on offer before Scott arrived was to escape.

During one especially bad year, between November 1993 and November 1994, 20 prisoners entered through the gate and didn't come back. Arriving in August 1994, Scott immediately tightened security. "The prison was designed for prisoners who weren't thought of as being likely to escape," he sighs. But prisoners have changed. "If you look at Porridge, the old lag, a likeable rogue, well it's a myth. They're much younger and more violent than

they were 20 years ago. Out of 547, we have 100 who are 21 or 22 and their crimes are much more violent."

As he speaks, the prison tannoy crackles into action announcing it is lunchtime and from outside his office, there is a crescendo of voices as the men leave the factory, pick up lunch from the canteen and go back to be locked in their cells until 1.15 pm. Though the men can't see them, a small clutch of their wives and children have arrived outside the main gate and are pushing their visitors' forms through the security grille.

I am wondering if Scott has an ulcer because he looks grey and possibly ill. "No," he smiles hesitantly. "But I have a lot of colleagues who suffer from ill-health. I mean it is a stressful job."

Of that there is little doubt. Only last Tuesday, two prison governors left their posts claiming their jobs were "on the brink of catastrophe". Meanwhile, Richard Tilt, the Prison Service director, announced he was containing "a crisis situation". The trouble is, we have grown used to these alarm calls from various quarters of the public sector, what do they actually mean?

Scott stares balefully at the cactus on his table struggling to produce a frugal crop of purple flowers. "There's such intense pressure and such overcrowding that we've gone backwards to where we were before the riots of 1990, before Parkhurst and Strangeways," he says slowly, directing me to figures which show the prison population has increased by 10,000 in the last two years.

"The services identified by Lord Justice Woolf in his report after Strangeways, which should be the touchstone of a modern prison service, well we just can't provide them."

"I'm not a Jonah," he protests dazedly. "The last thing we want is inmate disturbance, we don't want any of that, it's not pleasant when you have prisoners running around. It's very frightening. I remember Dartmoor when prisoners were smashing up their cells. We were lucky, we had them locked away at the time, but the noise was deafening and you'd be silly to say you weren't scared."

SO WHY is no one, the Home Secretary in particular, taking any notice of these warnings? "I think Michael Howard truly believes that if you treat prisoners more harshly, then when they're released and face the temptation of doing it again they'll think: 'Oh no, if I do this I'll end up in that nasty, horrible place called prison!' But that's such a simplistic approach to crime prevention. People who commit crimes think they're going to get away with it. And many people do."

So why does he think Howard has resisted the professionals' advice? "I don't know, he has advice from judges, prison reformers, the police, prison staff, but he feels we're not in touch with the public. He says he listens to us but he has to listen to the public too and they want harsher treatment. I don't think he's pandering to the public. I think he actually shares that view," and with that he slumps, exasperated on his chair.

Then he suddenly rallies: "If you want to know how to treat the sick you ask doctors! If you want to know how to run schools you ask teachers! If you want to know how to run prisons you should ask governors, you don't go to the public and ask them!"

"Howard thinks that while they're off the streets, criminals aren't committing crimes — which is true — but we take the longer view. While they're locked up, let's try to do something about trying to stop them doing it again when they get out. I know it's the Treasury, it's part and parcel of the whole move of cutbacks in public expenditure. I'm not arguing with that. All I'm saying is you should set deliverable targets. But we are being under-resourced so targets which were deliverable are not any longer."

Looking for a place to take a photograph, we walk outside, past rows of cell windows from which prisoners have hurled whole slices of white bread for the birds. "It's criminal the way the prison service is underrated in this country," Scott cries angrily. "It's



Chris Scott... "It's criminal the way the prison service is underrated in this country. It's undervalued and no one appreciates it."

underrated and undervalued and no one appreciates it. Yet the country couldn't exist without it! I mean you have to have a system which deals with the violent and persistent offenders, I'm not talking about jail for fine defaulters. But these are people who fall through the net and bang!" He claps his hands together sharply. "They end up in prison."

'If you look at Porridge, the old lag, a likeable rogue, well it's a myth.'

picking up speed. "When inevitably something goes wrong like at Parkhurst or Strangeways it attracts such an amount of attention it's as if everyone else can make mistakes but the prison service can't."

doing vigorous exercise seem to drop down dead don't they?" But surely he has some way of letting off steam, after being wound to the limit by pointless new paperwork and regulations? Earlier on he was complaining that he had to request permission to replace a single storeman. "Not even to get an extra one, just replace the one that was retiring. I can't manage without a storeman! Oh it's all so time-consuming."

PHOTOGRAPH: EAMONN MCCABE

JEREMY HARDY



Love him or loathe him, he's the only choice

WHEN you find yourself thinking, "I'd quite like Blair to lose the election, just to wipe that grin off his face," you must pause, reflect and consider what will happen if he does lose. I must confess to having had this thought myself.

We know the Tories will do terrible things if they get back in. But we should also consider what a monster Blair will become if he doesn't get in. True, he will be inufferable if he becomes Prime Minister, like that other aspirant Messiah, Michael Jackson, he will look more and more peculiar, sound more and more incomprehensible, and be less and less convincing when feigning emotion.

But if he loses, he will not stop and wonder whether it was right to do what he has done to Labour. He will decide that he has not done enough. When Neil Kinnock lost, some of us thought, "Surely now they'll stop chasing after a favourable editorial in the Daily Mail." But they didn't. And if Blair loses,

he will blame everybody but himself. He will put it down to Barbara Castle and the third of the conference who voted with her, and who revolted against him on every substantive issue.

It may be that Barbara Castle has saved Blair from losing the election. The perception that there are still people in the Labour Party with a bit of fight in them will hearten those who hope that a Labour government might actually do something. If Labour get in, it will not be because Blair is personally popular, many people who will vote Labour can't stand him.

Walworth Road will have done nothing to earn their votes. The keen young electioneers will be too busy wondering which way Richard Branson is swaying. In fact, I predict that the whole Labour election machine will be dedicated to polling Richard Branson, and he'll still vote Tory. Gordon Brown will continue to court a handful of business leaders, raising the alarming thought that we

have a shadow chancellor who hasn't calculated that, however rich people are, they still only have one vote each. Meanwhile, millions of ordinary people will not vote at all.

Those Daily Mail readers who are thinking of changing to Labour probably do like Blair, but they don't like Labour, so may not vote for him when it comes to it. "I'm still frightened that Mr Hesler will take over," they'll say. Indeed, the suspicion that Blair's premiership will not last long crops up in more cheerful tones in conversations on the left.

Some think Livingstone will go for it. Some cling to the notion that Prescott is biding his time, although Prescott is not really a left-winger — he's just fat with a northern accent. The fact that you can see a man's vest through his shirt doesn't make him a socialist.

Some optimists even seem to think there'll be a real palace coup, with the Queen challenging Blair from the left. Some go so far as to

believe that Blair himself is only pretending to be a Blairite. But, somehow, I think he's genuine about that. Once in power, I can't see him shouting, "April Fool!" and nationalising the banks.

Whatever does happen, Blair will not have it all his own way.

Once in power, I can't see Tony Blair shouting, 'April Fool!' and nationalising the banks

and I maintain that this fact is to Labour's advantage. People who've been wondering whether they can stomach voting Labour this time, will think of less emetic Labour politicians and place their

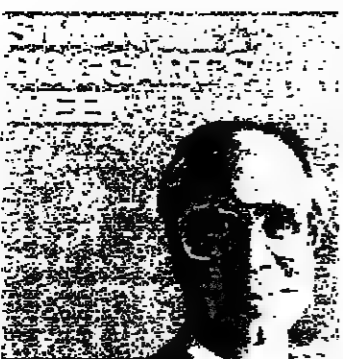
cross to stop the Tories. The blip in the opinion polls probably helped, too, reminding us that Labour could lose. A sure-fire victory can be a self-defeating prophecy. Why vote for them if they're going to get in anyway? But voting Labour is like wiping your bottom — you may not particularly like doing it but you've got to because you're in a worse mess if you don't.

The one thing that can ensure a Labour victory starts on Monday morning. Fortunately, the Tory conference comes last, and when that repulsive rabble are fresh in your mind, you want to wipe them away with every fibre in your bathroom. Many of us casually say, "Labour now are as bad as the Tories". But Labour could never, ever, be as bad as that.

A FRIEND of mine is serving a seven-year sentence at Littlehey Prison in Cambridgeshire. I am not trying to impress anyone by suggesting that I know some pretty hard people. Sean was

wrongly convicted and is not very hard at all. Anyway, last month his legal papers were seized during a cell search. Some documents were later returned, all of which are already in the possession of the Home Office. However, papers relating to Sean's approach to the European Court were withheld, and he is only allowed the rest of his papers during bang-up, which obviously hampers his efforts to work on his case.

I complained to the prison, and have now received a letter from J D Addison, Head of Custody, who tells me that "a number of prisoners have in the past lent or hired depositions containing lurid details of their crimes for the vicarious gratification of others". I am sure that is true; sex offenders are notorious for feeding off each other's depravity. Sean Parry, however, was convicted of robbing a building society with a starting pistol. If any pervers think they might be turned-on by this case, please write to me care of the Guardian.



The rights and wrongs of the political hot pot

THE CURRENT New Yorker contains an article about Bret Kimberlin, the convict who claimed that he had sold pot to Dan Quayle as a student...

had, self-deluded man. What's even more surprising is that in the same 1992 election, Bill Clinton had a massive victory after he admitted smoking pot...

Candidates will say it is outrageous to suggest that they were not permanently stoned at university

reading in the book. At one point, he describes a ministerial visit to the United States where his private secretary causes a table to collapse by fiddling with the 'nobs' underneath it...

climbed to the top of the greasy pole and intends to stay there. RIDING on the 'Big One' roller-coaster at Blackpool I noticed a gang of young men so scruffy and badly dressed that I assumed they were part of the new, dispossessed underclass...

SMALLWORLD THERE HAS BEEN far too much cynical comment about the reluctance of MPs and their select committees to get to grips with allegations of parliamentary malpractice...

Theme for Euro vision



It's sure to cause a row at next week's Tory party conference - Europe. In an exchange of letters, Eurosceptic John Redwood and elder statesman and Europhile grandee Lord Howe give a taste of the in-fighting to come



Dear Geoffrey, DID so agree with your recent letter to a national newspaper, when you and five other senior Conservatives said you wanted the United Kingdom to influence the European debate...

whilst you held that important office and I always thought that was a crucial part of your success. Subsequently, when we joined the Government had about the ERM were ignored. We had a very bumpy ride and ended in a deep recession.

debate certainly requires 'pragmatism and common sense' - but it also demands stronger national commitment to a common purpose. We cannot hope to play that confident role if we continuously contest the legitimacy of the entire endeavour.

Dear Geoffrey, I WAS pleased to see that we agree Britain should influence Europe for the better, and that pragmatism and common sense are needed. We are also at one in seeing unemployment as a central problem...

Dear John, THE Editor should perhaps have foreseen that we would soon spend hurling chunks of economic history at each other!

Dear John, MANY thanks for your Irish example. All your questions with dramatic clarity. No country fought harder than Ireland for sovereignty and nationhood...

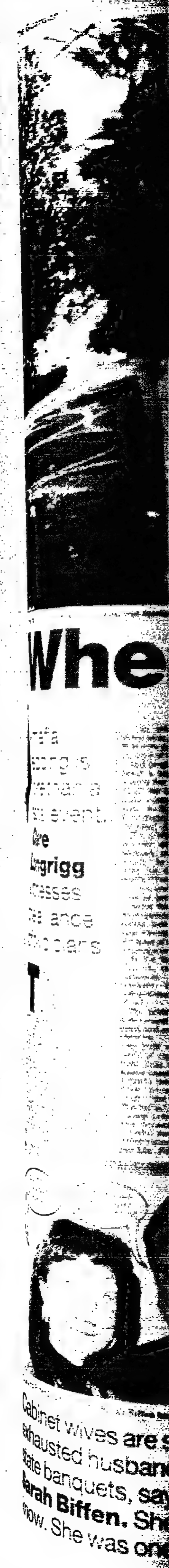
ANN WIDDECOMBE, I see, was 49 yesterday. Manchester City's supremo Francis Lee needs to move fast to get her installed as manager before her next birthday, since a manager who'd just turned 50 might not command the necessary credibility with the players...

THROUGH SOME mysterious process, paper messages between Tony Blair and his aides have been intercepted and preserved for posterity. One of these tantalisingly reported that Mrs T had been in touch and had left a message. We have yet to hear from Labour's gymnasts what the message said...

TEST DRIVE YOUR BRAIN. WALK () NEXT ZERO () CALF EVEN () ADDS KNIT () INTO CLAD () FLEE KERB () YELP GERM () ROAD. Mensa logo and contact information.

Doonesbury BY GARRY TRUDEAU. A four-panel comic strip about a man's obsession with a woman's name.

THE TRADUCING OF Janet Anderson for making untoward remarks in an interview with Petronella Wyatt of the Telegraph is a very depressing affair. Whole columns of chattering have followed her statement - a manifesto pledge, she specifically said that promiscuity would burgeon under a Labour government.





Breaking with the past... 16-year-old Marianna Giuliano and Michael Mazarrella are uniting two leading camorra families

PHOTOGRAPH BY LUCIANO FERRARA

Where is the Godfather?

A mafia wedding is more than a social event. Clare Longrigg witnesses the alliance of two clans

THE NARROW crowded streets of the historic Naples neighbourhood of Forcella are bustling with excitement. Groups of women clutching bundles of sugared almonds in lace kerchiefs stand in the bright autumn sunlight chattering animatedly. It is the wedding day of Marianna, at 16 the youngest daughter of the statuesque blue-eyed local mafia boss Luigi Giuliano, known as "O Re", the king. Outside the church stands the bridegroom, Michael Mazarrella, also 16, son of a mafia boss from another part of town and a nervous, spotty adolescent gift-wrapped in cream satin jacket and trousers.

"The bride! The bride!" Heads ably with gasp and strain to look. Huge blue eyes gaze out from beneath an expanse of white foaming satin, her round pregnant belly disguised beneath a high collar. The man leading her to the altar is not "the king", but her grandfather, Pio Vittorio, a small, kindly man with a wide smile over big false teeth. Everybody is thinking, where is the king? The priest intones that marriage is a very serious institution. "You, Michael, will be the head of the family," he says, then giggles, realising the double meaning of his words. "You will have to prove that you are worthy of respect." By the time he gets to the bit about God blessing this union with children, he is speechless with laughter. Two young men walk quickly up the aisle waving bags for the collection, but none of the expensively-dressed congregation offers anything. As the happy couple leaves the church, there is a terrifying explosion — it turns out to be firecrackers. The groom shakes a bottle of champagne and sprays the crowd. The bride's family has taken a dive recently. Once the most powerful, and numerous, family in the camorra — the Naples mafia — they built an empire on the proceeds of cigarette smuggling and, later, drug trafficking. In a world where numbers mean power, Pio Vittorio, the patriarch, had 11 children, among whom stand out Luigi, "the king", and Carmine, "the baron". Luigi's charisma is legendary: on one occasion, local residents crowded the narrow streets to obstruct police who had come to arrest him. Following a police crack-

down in the early 1980s, however, the Giuliano family has watched its empire shrink to the confines of the neighbourhood it dominates in the centre of the old part of town, where family members collect protection money and hoard the proceeds of their drug-trafficking. The drug trade has not brought the family untainted benefits. Pio Vittorio confided to me last year, over coffee and cigarettes, that a few of his grandsons were cocaine addicts. In 1988, another grandson, Vittorio, aged just 14, died of an overdose, and the boy's father dissociated himself from the camorra and dedicated himself instead to saving addicts. Luigi Giuliano followed this example, declaring himself a convert. Police were less than convinced, and pursued him relentlessly. He was released from prison for health reasons earlier this year (he has heart trouble) and held under house arrest. He is currently free and awaiting trial. At the wedding reception, the teenage couple sit at the top table. Marianna's pregnancy has turned a teen romance into a peace bond, uniting two camorra families who have been at war intermittently for over a decade. The bridegroom's family, the Mazarrella clan, fell foul of the Giuliano in the 1980s, when Ciro Mazarrella made a bid for dominance of the camorra, bringing him into direct opposition with Luigi Giuliano. In the war that followed, hundreds of camorra members were killed in savage battles, often with knives. On one occasion, a member of the Giuliano family sent a down radio set into the Naples prisons as gifts for his men: inside each one was taped a cut-throat

razor. In another incident, a member of the Mazarrella family was sent into the Naples prison to shoot Luigi Giuliano's brother Carmine, "the baron", wounding him in the legs. Those days of attrition are now over. The two quiet 16-year-olds, and their baby that will be born in December, have put an end to all that. At the reception in a sumptuous hotel at the foot of Vesuvius, the only photographer allowed in is the family's trusted portraitist — who warns us to keep away or we'll get thrown out with the smokies. I dodge past the various minders strolling around and throw myself at the patriarch, Pio Vittorio, grandfather of the bride, who welcomes us warmly and chats about the joys of skinny-dipping in the sea at his time of year. The bride sways into the garden, pulling 20 feet of train, followed by her husband. The couple release a pair of sun-tail doves, and each guest is handed a hollow pineapple containing champagne cocktail. At the entrance to the lavish, gilded dining room, four men on their knees are busy opening hundreds of oysters. A compare below through a microphone and 200 guests in Versace and Valentino and four-inch heels totter to their seats. Men in chunky gold jewellery and shiny suits leer at other on both cheeks, ignore the wine in ice buckets and order Coca-Cola. Half the guests are in black, although not, apparently, because they are in mourning. One of the notorious Giuliano twins, recently arrested for extortion (they decided they didn't have to pay the extensive family's laundry bill — the laundry owner dis-

agreed) saunters by in white tuxedo and wing collar, his hair shaved on the back and sides, with long strands greased on top. It all seems strikingly familiar: a classic case of life imitating art. "They've watched all the Godfather movies," a policeman told me. "I find the videos on the shelf every time I raid a mafia house. That's where they learn how to behave." The tables fill up with blue-eyed Giulianos covered in gold. But where is the king? The bride's mother, donna Carmela, files past, throwing her high-heeled shoes in mock petulance across the floor. She married at 13, and is often said to be the real boss of the Giuliano family. "Yes, it's a pity my husband couldn't be here," she agrees, laughing — then files off to greet more guests. Marriage has an important function in creating an alliance between mafia clans, particularly in Calabria, where a wedding can put an end to a blood feud of several generations and claiming several hundred murders. But it also has social significance. Neapolitans are great party people, and marriage is one of the last major feasts left for them to celebrate in extravagant style. Mafia weddings are traditionally lavish: a banquet for hundreds of eminent guests provides an opportunity to show off the family's wealth and power (police observers are often posted outside to take note of the family's influential allies). A camorra boss, very like a feudal lord, has to command respect and adoration in his neighbourhood: his territory is the seat of his power. When he makes a fortune he cannot shove away, but remains in ever more lavishly dec-

orated quarters over dingy run-down streets. The boss is the local patron: people come to him with their problems — an unemployed boy, a family in debt, a pregnant girl fitted by her boyfriend — and it is his job to sort it out. As a result, he has a loyal gang of followers who will take up arms in his defence, act as look-out for police intruders, and pay him protection for their business activities. A family wedding is a big event for the neighbourhood to show its loyalty and devotion to the boss. Strange, then, that the bride's father is not here. One of the photographers says he is in hospital, with heart trouble. Everybody else pretends to find his absence unremarkable. One of the star singers of the evening, a crooner called Gigi d'Alessio, sings one of Luigi Giuliano's songs, a moving ballad about how he misses Naples when he is away. Everyone looks moved. At his last daughter's wedding, Luigi Giuliano talked about leaving Naples. Is he on the run? At about 11 o'clock, six courses down and half-way through the

meal, I go to the ladies (the attendant's walk for tips is empty) and take a saucer outside to clear my head. I step out among the palm trees on the white-tiled floor, just as a thick-set bruiser in a shiny suit slams his hand across his wife's face, sending her sobbing across the terrace. The family lawyer makes his entrance: he is greeted reverently and planted on the top table. "Dottore!" calls out donna Carmela as she shimmies through a samba. The lawyer, who has been getting members of the Giuliano family out of prison for decades, is a local celebrity and guest of honour. He shakes his head fondly at the excesses of the family celebration. "It went on till four in the morning," he tells me later. "Terrible." So where is Luigi? "He had a quarrel with his wife donna Carmela the night before. Those two have been going at it for years, and when they fight, she hits him, plates fly, everything gets smashed. He has a weakness for young girls, and his wife let him have it. Oh, they'll make it up in a day or two."



Gail and Peter Lilley... a role Sarah Biffen has happily left behind

Cabinet wives are sick of exhausted husbands and state banquets, says Sarah Biffen. She should know. She was one

RUMOUR has it that Cabinet wives have had enough. Some of them are longing for the General Election. Their breakfasts have been ruined regularly for months by newspaper headlines trumpeting the impending demise of the Government and the glamour and the perks are beginning to pall. The most-tainted, the hours, the pressures, the absence of quality time are all wearing them down. They are fed up with their husbands returning home at all hours, exhausted and weighed down with countless red boxes to be read before breakfast. They are fed up when the long-planned "quiet evening at home" is rained again at the last minute. Caroline Waldgrave says how difficult it is to get time with William and the children. They try to keep Sunday free "but we are usually rushing back to London so it is a bit of a non-day". Weekday evenings are non-starters. The uncertainty is a great strain. The opinion polls and political commentators have been sending out messages of unremitting doom and gloom. As a Cabinet minister, you cannot go down to the JobCentre or apply to Head Hunters when the future looks bleak. And it's not as if the pay is that good: high-flying contemporaries in law or the City earn double. The constant criticism is hard to take. It is very dispiriting to hear your husband savaged on Today and the Government and its policies knocked on Newsnight. The life isn't much good

for the health either. The hours, working, rush food and drink do nothing for the looks or waistline. You have only to compare today's photographs of Mr Major and his team with old ones to see the toll it takes. But what of the glamour and the perks? Certainly not in a fairytale. I spent eight years as a Cabinet wife. My husband John was successively Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Secretary of State for Trade and Leader of the House of Commons. All the "firsts" are tremendously exciting. The first visit to Buckingham Palace; the first time you step through the doors of Number 10; the first banquet at the Guildhall. It is all magic. However, after five Lord Mayor's banquets and six State openings of Parliament and a month's worth of official dinners, the novelty begins to wear thin. What about the fascinating people and all the "firsts"? Certainly not. I do very well on State occasions when they get to sit next to the visiting dignitary. Michael Heseltine tells the story of the official lunch when John and he were seated either side of an ecstatically bubbled lady with very little English. Michael struggled valiantly through the meal exhausting every topic of conversation. Eventually, during the pudding, John turned to her and said: "When are you going home?" It's not all jam for us. At a dinner in his honour, the Polynesian Prime Minister actually fell

asleep beside me with his head on the table — a combination of my conversation and the whisky. The taxpayer has kindly sent me to innumerable musicals. I have mistaken the Canadian Prime Minister for the Queen of the South. Unfortunately Mrs Mulroney chose Starlight Express. Had I not come armed with earplugs the evening would have been a disaster. Clothes are a nightmare. It is wonderful to be invited to a state banquet but jeans won't do. The average person's wardrobe does not contain white tie and tails. We muddled through; John squeezed into my grandfather's 1937 tail coat, while I got out the needle and thread and chipped up my mother's old evening dresses. With a borrowed tiara, £16.99 British Home Stores top and raw silk skirt, I would mix with the Victoria Beckham and Jean Mitras. Edith Pittman is very philosophical. "We spend most of our time with the children as we can. Malcolm still owes me a 25th wedding anniversary trip to Florence, cancelled 18 months ago because of Bosnia." Salvation for the disconsolate wives does not depend upon Mr Blair and an election defeat. Should the pollsters be proved wrong and Mr Major triumphs, there is still hope for them. There will be a new Cabinet. Veterans such as Freddy Maynard are giving up and in any case the PM will want some fresh faces round the table. For some, May 1, 1997, can't come soon enough.

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arts

Prisoner of his fame

Jason Donovan is on the comeback trail at 28. He's done stardom, now he just wants to be honest about his life, he tells Simon Hattenstone

EXPECTING the pretty little boy that young girls used to wrap in plastic hearts... Donovan, unshaven, straggly hair, track-suit bottoms and that khaki hat that comic-strip Aussies wear with dangling cords...

rush through his head? "No, but it probably should have. I've felt I have gone too far in certain areas. But drugs can be constructive as well as destructive. You know, Alice in Wonderland wasn't written on a glass of water and three cookies..."

young and I was virtually brought up by a gay guy for six years so I was surrounded by the gay community and I loved it. He used to look after the house and make sure I was fed. That's what hurt most about being segregated. I paid the price for alienating the gay community and my gay audience. I lost a whole group of fans for no other reason than trying to be honest with myself..."

Donovan's PR says that he doesn't want photos taken today and you can see why — there's a nasty scab on his top lip, another on his cheek and a cracker on the bridge of his nose. I ask him if he's been in a fight and he smiles that old peppy Neighbours smile and says he had a fall in his kitchen.

He realises it all goes back to the product. Like Take That and Boyzone. Donovan was packaged to appeal to little girls, teeny-boppers, young mums, grannies and — even though he was probably too young to realise it at the time — gay men. No wonder the sexual politics of the packages, if not their sexuality, are confused.

Did the screaming ever go to his head? "No, not really. I know it wasn't going to last. This is the afterglow. It's still an adjustment to come back from hyper to reality." Which does he prefer? "Oh, the hyper... it was easier to get to gigs, there used to be a massive fucking entourage and caterers catering for you and loving every snap you take. Does he miss it? "Eeesssssssss, for sure. Wouldn't you? You have to pay for your own food these days. Does he see the hyper days coming back? "No, probably not. I don't see it on the scale it was. This is pretty quiet, pretty dull, boring."

Donovan has often said he was a product, a sanitised pop star 30 years behind his time but perfect fodder for the late 1980s. Was this a bad thing? "No, I was directed by a group of people who knew more about the music business than I needed to know at the time. I jumped on the bandwagon and toy dreams came true. They did. I was 22-23 and I started to go. 'Fuck! This is bigger than I expected to be.' It was fucking great fun. It's just what do you do once your dreams have come true? What is expected of you, what do others want you to do? I'm still looking for the answer."

And the stories kept coming. Jason was gay, Jason was a self-confessed tart having lots of affairs. Why didn't he ignore it? He says he did for as long as he could but it's not easy when your girlfriend is lying in bed with you demanding to know if the rumours are true.

He spent part of his two-year break writing a film script. He says it's a bit autobiographical. It's about a loser who becomes famous overnight, thinks he's cool but is untrue to himself. "His shortcoming is he tries too hard to be someone, he takes it too seriously." Was he ever in danger of taking himself too seriously? "No because I've never had anyone around me. I've always had people who put you down. I was never cool. Surely he was the epitome of cool to the fans? "But never to myself. Being cool to myself would be being myself now, just honest, relaxed." The five-minute warning bell goes, and Donovan apologises for his Welsh accent in advance.

He may have been a product, but he was passionate about the product. "I knew it was cheesy but when you're on a roll you tend to think, look at the sales." Donovan has a tremendous enthusiasm for his past, even the nasty bits. But he did complain when he realised the image bore no resemblance to his reality. "They expected me to continue as Mr Cheese. To do Joseph for another couple of years, or to release Cliff Richard records. Now I think I've got the experience to make a few decisions myself and make a few mistakes which was never allowed before. I just needed to take time out to make these mistakes, to be honest. For example, I've always liked to smoke a joint — ever since Neighbours — and I wanted to be able to say as much."

What he feared the rumours would alienate his fan-base, it turned out to be the court case that lost him much of his following. He hadn't realised that it was impossible to sue without appearing homophobic. He was yelled at in public by gays and heterosexuals. "What really depressed me was that I had a lot of gay friends. My father and stepmother used to travel when I was..."

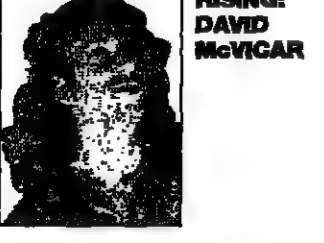
There's no roar or wail-whistling when he arrives on stage. It's a strange role: the psychopath spends his life lying, acting rather humorously. It makes it difficult to assess Donovan's performance in a staid production. He hams it up a little too much, but occasionally conveys the ghastly creepiness of the man. The Thyodrydes (after Dame Sybil) is the kind of theatre where the audience take out their teeth to eat ice cream. Donovan scares the audience witless in the second half when he bursts out of a closed curtain. There are a few shrieks. The play finishes with warm applause, but no encores. That may say as much about Leatherhead as Donovan. In the dressing room he said he would give me a lift back to London if he could get the car working. While I wonder whether it's worth a half-hour wait for him to change, I hear a shout. "Oy mate, come on." Donovan pops his head round the changing room door; he's back in his bush hat. He's taken about 30 seconds. He introduces me to two of his friends. One has the most life-affirming laugh I've heard in ages, the other talks beautifully about the gay artists Gilbert and George's and their work. Donovan has just bought a huge G & G montage of himself for £9,000. Donovan and friends are enjoying themselves, trying to beat his record time for getting back to London. A light is turning red. "Should I go for it?" says Donovan. He does, he misses by miles, we see a flash. "Probably means three points off the licence, but it's worth it — I love having my photo taken."



Norman Bates of Ramsay St: Donovan plays a psychopath in his new West End role. I'm sick of playing Mr Cheese. (Right) as gay icon Joseph

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALISTAIR HARRISON and DOUGLASH JEFFRIES

SHOOTING STARS



Up... After training in Glasgow both as an artist and an actor, McVicar graduates in 1983 and forms PenName Theatre Company. Then a string of successes around Scotland and, soon, beyond. Up... After a triumphant Amphitryon at The Gate, London, McVicar progresses to the West End... with Prisoner Cell Block II — The Musical, a frightening fusion of Scousers in drag and Aussies in fall which he singlehandedly rescues from awfulness. And away... Having made a designing-and-directing opera debut with Opera North in '93, McVicar now brings his visual skills to an Mozart's Idomeneo, which Scottish Opera launched in Glasgow this week. Since he's practised in vivifying the classics, it could be some homecoming.

FALLING ROBIN ELLIS



Going... As Ross Poldark, 18th-century Cornish do-gooder and mid-seventies TV ratings-topper, he is adored in households across the land: "I feel like a Beate." But it's goodbye to celebrity when Poldark buddies his last swish. Going... The most recent sighting of the horseback hunk: a starring role in Sylvia — a play about a dog — on Shaftesbury Avenue earlier this year. But someone must have poisoned the Poldark Charm: it closed after three weeks. Gone... As part of the cult for retired old favourites, Poldark carries back on screen. But Ellis has been cruelly overlooked. Does his current low profile hint at an elaborate smuggling plot to sneak him into the series inside a cask of ale? I wouldn't be surprised.

Keith Burstein welcomes a new big-money prize for accessible music Just an old-fashioned tune

Provocations SO £300,000 is to be invested in the administration of a new prize to encourage composers of accessible classical music. To the ears of a total composer like myself this is very good news. I predict that the prize will change contemporary music for ever. It is one thing to agitate while doing creative work, as I did when I co-founded The Hecklers in 1984 and announced that we would boo Birtwistle's Gawain (for being dissonantly passé) at the Royal Opera House. But it is altogether something else to use big money to solve the problem. I joyfully contemplate Birtwistle, George Benjamin, Judith Weir, and the rest hurriedly taking down the Guide To Tonal Harmony to look up the key signature of G sharp minor. For no composer, however wrapped in his university fellowship, will be able to ignore the lure of a £25,000 prize. Even Radio 3, that last outpost of



artistic Stalinism, with its compulsory dissonant music, is involved in this bold enterprise. And the Society For The Prevention — I'm sorry, Promotion — of New Music is in there as well. Where will it all end? It will end where it began, in tonality. The 20th century experiment of dissonant music was bound to fall for a very simple reason. All good music is tonal. And that's because the harmonic series, the frequency at which sound vibrates in nature, vibrates tonally. The first three overtones form a major chord.

There actually is a reason why Mozart is more beautiful than Birtwistle. And you don't have to know that to understand that new classical music has suffered a catastrophic crisis of popularity since its emergence in the 19th century. Vienna and its existential angst, but it is completely inadequate as the expressive correlative of our New Age. Fine, mutter my colleagues of the modernist school. "You can hear kind of tone-type things in our music. Of course we chop the tunes up. You can't actually hear them as tunes. It would be embarrassing. Haven't you heard James Macmillan, good modern music that uses tunes intelligently?" What? The Story by Gaste is good modern music that uses tunes intelligently. The claim of the modernist classical school to have progressed out of the mire of dissonance is a big lie. Noel Gallager is doing in rock what we must now do in classical music: he is repressing the great music of his cultural past to provide access to the future.

I began my music in memory of John Smith, A Live Flame, premiered last year, with a simple trumpet melody stated once, accompanied by orchestra. I got the most exhorting reviews anyone can remember. Incessant by The Hecklers, most critics are still hostile. What none seemed to notice was that the comparisons they made between my music and Elgar, Mahler, Strauss, and Vaughan Williams were actually immensely flattering. These were the last great composers who spoke to the world. They knew that there are three things that matter: melody, melody and melody. When I met Arvo Pärt (one of the few important living composers) last year, he put his pencil to his heart and said: "Always write from here, from your heart." Now, having heard my music, he has split his commission, and his fee with me, enabling me to write a mass for Norwich Cathedral. It is premiered there next week. It needs only a few as generous as Pärt to change it all. Turning round the huge vessel of 20th century modernism is not easy. But the sponsors of this prize may have done more to point us in a new direction than they know. Missa Brevis, Norwich Cathedral, October 13, 10.30am

Book of the Week

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CHANNEL SURFING
ADAM SWEETING

Canned trash

COLLEGE TV really reached the U-bend this week with the launch of Granada Sky, its most plunger-defying offering being a programme called Coming Soon, scheduled for late nights, with the Vinnie Jones interview as its centrepiece. He interviewed Peter Stringfellow in his club on a sofa surrounded by strippers — you're starting to get the tone, aren't you? Vinnie's opening gambit, learned doubtless from observation of the techniques of the greats like Parkinson, was: "So Peter, these 2,000 birds you've slept with... I've been doing some maths and it's one a night for seven years." Vinnie obviously can't believe anyone has sex on Saturdays or gets their leg over during the League Cup, because it works out at one a night for 5.478 years. With the possible exception of the Performance Channel, with its sopranos in pursuit of periwigged tenors, all shot from 2,000 yards, the cable revolution is aiming at the young, the frivolous and the senile. Great swathes of programming are targeted at children — the Disney Channel, Nickelodeon, the Cartoon Network, large chunks of the Family Channel. MTV and local cable pop stations like the Box clearly aren't pitching for the over-35s, while the Sci-Fi Channel is lo-fi trash. And never mind that the Discovery Channel cloaks itself in a supposedly educational remit. It's thinly disguised boys' own programming, with loads of stuff about classic fighter planes and military units. The History Channel is variation on the same theme, with spuriously authoritative pot-boilers about Saddam Hussein. At least there are oases of escapism with style. While it will never match the tacky patache of Bravo's time-warped television, Sky 1 has settled into a niche as a relaxed provider of new American series which all look as though they were made

In the 1970s. You'd have to be a world-class curmudgeon to deny the allure of Sky 1's round-the-clock roster. It's impossible to imagine a finer way to de-tune from the day than subsiding into repeats of Superman (the result early ones, when Daily Planet editor Perry White realised "the smell of fear in the newsroom") followed by Midnight Caller starring Gary Cole as radio host Jack Killian. His nightly sign-off with "good-night America, wherever you are" is one of the most sentimental moments in TV history, but doesn't seem quite so preposterous in intermittent flashes of consciousness at 1am. Our lives would be immeasurably diminished without junk TV, but it would be nice to think that it won't be all there in five years' time. The odds aren't looking good. A decade ago, who would have imagined that anything as shamelessly shoddy as shopping channel QVC could exist, let alone be an outrageous commercial success? Even when purporting to address significant topics, cable and satellite is always Comfort Television. Hard news becomes a warm bath of factoids, presented by sub-celebrities never designed to become memorable, unless they happen to be CNN's indelibly-mockered White House correspondent, Wolf Blitzer. Sky News whips the news into an easy-to-swallow paste, as if the audience were assumed to be semi-invalids swathed in blankets. I trust you spotted the cameo role by Sky News's Bob Friend in Independence Day, an event brought to you by the cross-promoting Murdoch empire, in which news is merely a tiny ingredient in the entertainment mix. Trash can be its own reward, but it's when the cheap channels pretend to be earnest and adult that you really want to vomit. Anything from Live TV demands to be taken with a heavy dose of salt, and The Sex Show is a fine addition to their schedules with its strippers interact with phone-ins from Hung-Up of Bermudez. UK Living does a thing called The Ergonomics Zone. Ostensibly an intimate chat about sexual problems, it's an embarrassing parade of gosh psychology and tips about masturbation. Best Time Story is a tittering parody of Book At Bedtime, maybe featuring a bonking episode from Lady Chatterley's Lover. It's like inviting viewers to go behind the school like sheds with a copy of Penthouse and a packet of Woodhims. I recommend a solid shower, or Mountain Truck Racing on Eurosport. Additional material by JOHN DURCAN

London — a colony at the west end of Broadway

Michael Billington warns to the genius of one invader, Gene Wilder

The Yanks

IN THE programme for Neil Simon's diverting Laughter on the 23rd Floor at the Queen's, they print a glossary of American terms: the Fifth Amendment, the Rosenbergs and Walter Cronkite are all explained. It strikes me as a well-meant but superfluous gesture given that we are all now surrogate Americans: our historic appropriation of their territory has been followed by the cultural colonisation of ours. You think I exaggerate? Look around. Plays by Albee, Shepard, Mamet, Miller, Williams, and Simon himself, are on stage or in production. Our cinema and TV are saturated with American product: last night on the box you had a choice of Larry Sanders, Seinfeld, Caroline in the City Friends and a quartet of American movies. Even our foreign policy is still, in many respects, dominated by American thinking. Jimmy Carter's speculation in Look Back In Anger that "perhaps all our children will be Americans" now looks more like an accurate prophecy than an ironic joke. Even so, cultural differences remain, not least in the field of comedy. And watching Simon's play helps to elucidate them. One is the American veneration of show-business and the belief that celebrity confers a kind of godliness. Simon's deeply autobiographical play draws on his experiences as a writer in the 1950s for Sid Caesar's Your Show Of Shows: an apparently anarchic, topical 90-minute laugh-fest whose cutback by NBC to an hour is seen as a symptom of the dumbed-down of America. Simon has a good point. But it is hard to imagine any British drama-

ist taking us behind the scenes of The Goons, TW3 or Monty Python and using the show as a metaphor of national life. Simon comes not to bury Caesar but to praise him; and behind his play lurks an assumption that the star's humiliation by the network was an index of national decline. Simon's play also shows that the American unit of comedy is the gag whereas ours is the situation. Their comedies depend on cleverness: ours on embarrassment. True, Simon is writing about funnymen who live by their wits — but he also shows how, in life as much as work, they resort to the quick retort. "Is this a personal or business call?" someone asks a guy phoning his mistress. "It depends who answers," the snap reply later, the same character, appalled at the network's cutbacks, enquires "Are the bagels getting bigger? Is the room getting smaller?" There is not much plot: the drive comes from a barrage of one-liners of a kind you would never find in Ayckbourn. Even more revealing is a delight in craziness which goes back to the Kaufman and Hart comedies of the 1930s. In a deeply conformist society any eccentricity is seen as a badge of protest. In Simon's play a pair of shoes is hurled out of the window the star punches holes in the wall, the writers even wrestle each other to the floor in a fight over ownership of a gag. The Pythons, for all I know, may have behaved in much the same way. But in Simon's play, craziness is seen not just as a condition of comedy but as proof of spiritual vitality. Which brings me — not before time — to the chief pleasure of the evening: Gene Wilder's performance. The play itself is enjoyable, but for me, not up there with a Simon classic like The Odd Couple: that offered a universal comment on co-habitation whereas this is rooted, for all its occasional references to McCarthyism, in the specific world of show-business. But Wilder's performance as the Sid Caesar figure (here called Max Prince) has an inspired oddity. Wilder, with his wire-wool hair and long thin upper-lip, has the face of a natural clown. Even more importantly, he seems to exist in some private world of his own full of dreams and devils. External reality is stubbornly recalcitrant; gripping a chair arm in anger; Wilder finds it comes away in his hand and, clutching a paper cup, he discovers the water leaks relentlessly. Wilder's eyes seem to be focused on the middle distance, as if he's on the earth but not quite in it; even single words take on a new resonance so that when he repeatedly assures everyone he's "fine", it emerges as a strangled cry for help. A lot of this is in the writing, but it is the actor himself who takes us to the Wilder shores of love and lunacy. Not surprisingly, the best supporting performances come from



Gene Wilder in Neil Simon's Laughter on the 23rd Floor, the latest US import

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Americans: in particular, Rolf Saxon as a solid pro for whom gags mean groceries on the table and Marcia Firesten as the sole female who wants to be regarded as a writer rather than as a woman. It may not be vintage Simon and, at times, you can hear him working hard to keep the balls in the air. But it's an enjoyable love-letter to Simon's own past and it shows in a variety of ways why American comedy, even in the age of the homogenised global village, retains its peculiar national identity. At the Queen's, London (0171 494 5040).

WAVE RIDING
ANNE KARP

Question times

IS THERE any area of human experience which will never become material for a quiz? Business and books, cookery and current affairs have all been done; it can't be long now before we get the sex quiz and the hypochondria quiz (What illness do these symptoms describe?). Meanwhile, we must make do with the sports quiz, the classical music quiz, and a panel game about lying. Listening to them in aggregate, you soon see that their devisers have a limited pool of options. Do you go for a witty presenter, who can grip it all up when your contestants sound like wilted lettuce? Or choose clever-dick panellists to dazzle the audience with their knowledge? Or flatter the listeners by making the questions answerably easy? Sick As A Parrot, Radio 5 Live's new sports quiz, has plumped for the first, not because its contestants are dullards but because, covering so many different sports which no single person could know about, the bantering question-master must hold it together. And also because, now genres miscigenate madly, the quiz must function primarily as comedy and increasingly does so through self-conscious irony, making knowing gags about the very idea of the quiz. Sick As A Parrot did this with aplomb, not only through presenter Jeremy Nicholas's comic repartee, but also via the jokey format. So former Man United manager Tommy Docherty's special subject was Tommy Docherty (question: how many brothers do you have, in the nearest brotherhood) and of course he got half the answers wrong, while the serious questions are labelled the anorak round, with the celebrity panellists joined by unknown enthusiasts. Radio 5's new quiz The Department Score, which pits one team of music students against another, blundered in with unanswerably hard questions, fired at the cross-examining speed of Mastermind. Either that, or current musical education isn't that good — or the students haven't been listening to enough Radio 5. Trying to dismantle the three different melodies which a triad was simultaneously playing could burst you a blood vessel. While Classic FM's new quiz, A Question of Classics which

begins tomorrow, is for aficionados of the compilation album. Listeners will recognise almost all the tunes, while the terminally jolly panellists are expected to name them. Quizzes are proliferating, partly because they make cheap, celebrity radio without sounding like Radio 4. A contestant is far more testable than a chat show guest. But also because, in a world where the only certainty is doubt, it's sweet to ask questions to which there are right answers. In the panel game, the questions are merely a launch-pad for the panellists' turn, and Radio 4's actually times one about public disimulation. I'm The Queen of Sheba, got off to a glittering start. The chairman Ken Livingstone has clearly found his métier — forget pestilent MP or newt collector: the chap was born to play a cheeky, mildly subversive panel game host (even if he didn't write all his own material). This is a genuinely sharp show, in which the teams occasionally answer questions, but are mainly expected to offer their own caustic versions of current lies. Rebecca From's commercial for supermarkets, parodying Sainsbury's recipe ads but with the punchline "a recipe for disaster", was wonderful. Bimedis, ahmmedia: TV will grab this one.

In a week when Britain has won jazz's equivalent of the Nobel prize for the second year running, John Fordham finds another star in our backyard

Small audience, big future

THE FIGHTBACK THIS WEEK was an intriguing one for jazz contradictions. On Wednesday the Arts Council published figures suggesting that attendances have sharply dropped since 1986. The next day young gun Django Bates won jazz's equivalent of the Nobel prize. Some thing about jazz never change, others of course do. As a musical form, it developed so fast and spread so widely because its practitioners maintained a healthy interest in change — so contradictions are always thrown up. For more of them look at the week's gigs. Some jazz performances offer a kind of security-blanket (like the veteran trumpet virtuoso Ruby Braff's) and some, by exploring a musical language still evolving, appear to offer no reassurance at all. But there is often a third kind of security — confirmation that the best musicians always find ways of communicating that transcend generations, cultures and old rules. While Braff's Pizza Express gig



Rising stock... Evan Parker, a master playing to 40 people was a beautiful symbol of a cherished past, the great English saxophone virtuoso Evan Parker (at London's Vortex) was a striking example of the way a dedication to collective improvisation, an old jazz virtue, can make the avant-garde's avoidance of orthodox melody and

fund jazz on this basis but the small print of its report admits: "Figures since 1990-91 do not necessarily indicate a decrease." Only in 1991 were attendances for pop and rock separated out creating an artificial impression that jazz audiences slumped after that year. Though business isn't as brisk as in 1986, the year of Courtney Pine's chart-busting album debut, jazz in the UK is in vigorous health. Performances like Evan Parker's will continue to be recognised as small but vital contributions to keeping a developing music alive. He has been steadily refining a virtuoso technique influencing mainstream performers for over 30 years, and though he has a reputation for astonishing unaccompanied recitals, the effect of his presence on ensembles is almost as marked. It was particularly in evidence in his second set when an all-improvised group dynamic evolved

that had a rolling momentum as hypnotic as swing. On tenor sax, he performed in a staccato manner as if the bell of the horn was alternately plugged and released, and on soprano he varied between seabird cries and the sound of many corks being popped. He frequently used these effects within a slowly undulating rhythm that drew partners into the same pulse. Occasionally Parker's origins in jazz became more explicit, particularly on tenor, when his lines sometimes took on a tender gravitas that almost suggested Coleman Hawkins. Superb piano playing both helped maintain the strength of the band and support Parker's ruminations, and the collective laurel near the close was about as compelling an argument for the best free-improvisers' sense of spontaneous form as could have been delivered.

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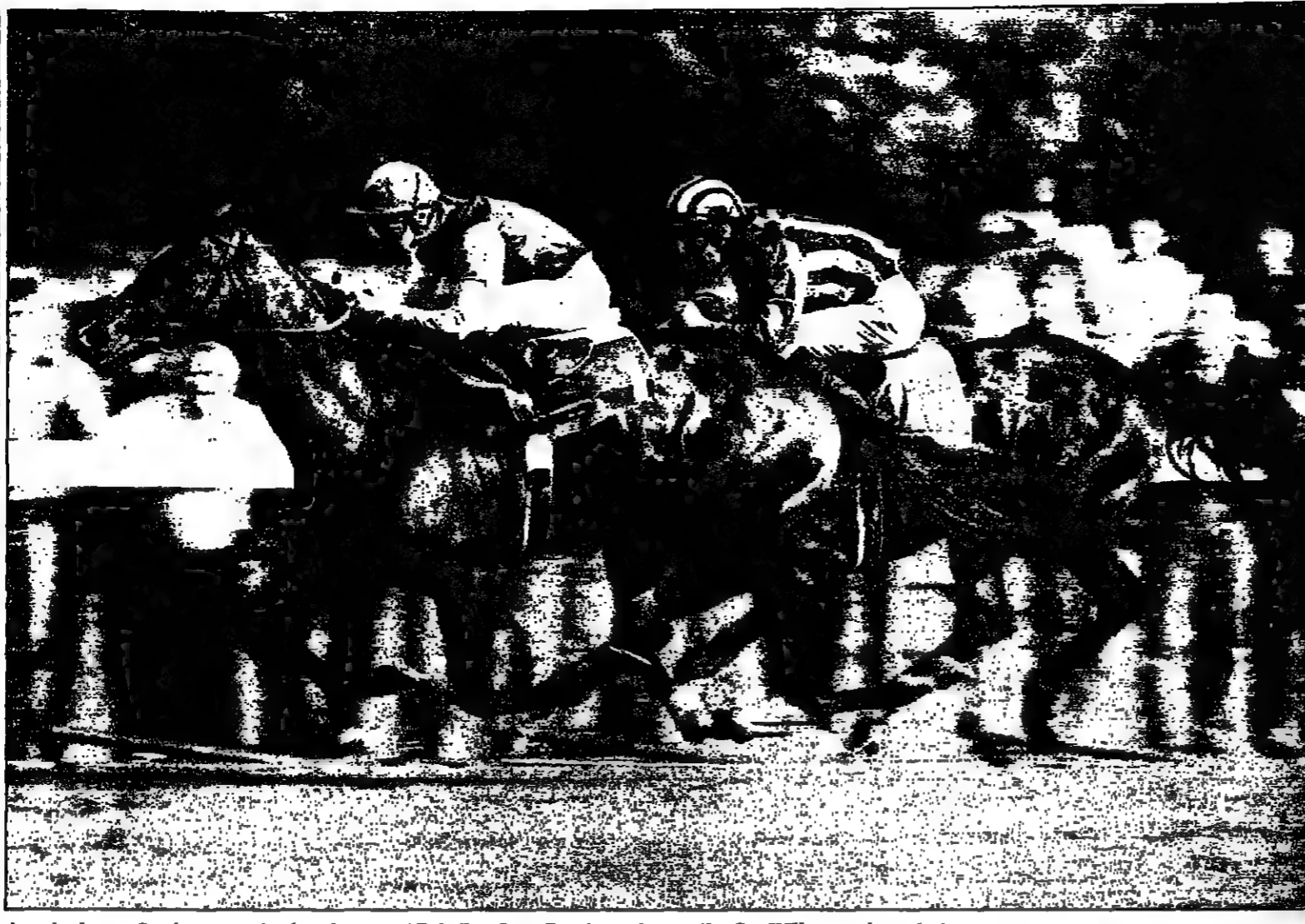
20 SPORTS NEWS

Racing

Chris Hawkins expects André Fabre to see off the foreign raiders and land his fourth Arc de Triomphe

Soft going ideal for Swain

MORE rain at Longchamp yesterday means that the ground is bound to be the soft side for tomorrow's Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, which should favour the French runners. Swain in particular.



Arc rivals... Swain, seen winning the recent Prix Foy from Pentire, takes on the Geoff Wragg colt again tomorrow

Swain, third to Kammattarra in the soft last year, has plenty going for him. He is trained by the brilliant André Fabre, who has had three winners of the race, and will be ridden by the French champion Thierry Jarret, whose Arc record is two wins in six attempts.

Swain is ultra-consistent and has never been out of the first three in his life. He has been lightly campaigned this year and after winning the Coronation Cup at Epsom ran in the Grand Prix de Saint-Cloud at the end of June when beaten a length by Hellisio.

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Big brother's watching Kammattarra

Almond Rock, a creditable fifth in a Group race in Germany last time, has the Angus-G, a string of good handicaps runs to his name. He would prefer easier ground but rarely runs a bad race.

The John Godden stable is keen on North Song, who did not get the run of the race at Goodwood last time out. He has a big pull in the weights with Missile on earlier running over the July Course and is my idea of the winner if Kammattarra (3-30) fails to finish.

Big race field BBC 2

Table listing race details for BBC 2, including race number, name, time, and participants.

Newmarket with form for the televised events

Table listing race details for Newmarket, including race number, name, time, and participants.

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Chepstow (N.H.)

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Longchamp today BBC 1

Table listing race details for Longchamp today, including race number, name, time, and participants.

Channel 4

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RACELINE 0930 1684 advertisement with logo and contact information.

GO HEVER GOLF advertisement for a golf course in Saint-Cloud.

Advertisement for a horse named 'Davy' with contact information.

Anabaa primed for Abbaye advertisement for a horse named Anabaa.

Large vertical advertisement for 'Monty No. 1 s Woosn' and 'Nazabal' on the right edge of the page.

Soccer

Lee scoffs at link with Sullivan

Peter White

BIRMINGHAM CITY were thrown into turmoil last night after the club's multi-millionaire backer David Sullivan angrily threatened to sell up because of legal action instituted by the local council.

FA misconduct charge for Reid

PETER REID yesterday became the fifth Premiership manager this season to be charged with misconduct by the Football Association, after last week's touchline confrontation with the referee Paul Dawson.

Group Seven: Wales v Holland

Why Jordi must shine in a giant's shadow

Other English clubs were interested in him, but there was no competition once he had been bought by United.

Group Four: Latvia v Scotland

Brown smiling through

RAIG BROWN brought his players here yesterday trusting in an old order. Despite the mishaps that have turned his plans topsy-turvy, Colin Jess of Coventry became the fifth manager to remain in his job after a night of philosophy.

Armenia may be a mouthful for the Irish

LIKE Northern Ireland, the word minnow, formerly incorporated into the Soviet 11 games, losing eight and winning one, that being the case in a European Championship qualifying match, writes Michael Walker in Belfast.



Crucial test... Cruyff leads the Dutch line but still has the burden of history to carry

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World Cup qualifying, Group Two: England v Poland

Le Tissier sees light at the end of the tunnel

DAVID LACEY on Glenn Hoddle's vote of confidence for England's mercurial Saint

MATTHEW Le Tissier was yesterday given the strongest hint yet that he could play a crucial role in England's attempt to qualify for the 1998 World Cup, even if he is not included in Glenn Hoddle's starting line-up for Poland at Wembley.

Merson allowed time off for better behaviour

IT WOULD be all too easy to greet with a cynical shrug the news that the sole England player allowed to attend a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous.

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MensHealth ON SALE NOW

Bergkamp drops out to give Wales a boost

Armenia may be a mouthful for the Irish

Group Four: Latvia v Scotland

Armenia may be a mouthful for the Irish

light at tunnel

allowed for behaviour

through

for the Irish

Soccer

Dennis weak on the wing

Soccer Diary

Martin Thorpe

THE sky is not the limit for Dennis Bergkamp: the tarmac is. He is so scared of flying he drives to all away games. Five hours from Holland to Cardiff for today's match, for instance. "I can't do anything about it," he admits. "I know I couldn't do any more flying. I just freeze up and get panicky. I am even considering seeing a psychiatrist."

He has not flown for about two years now, dis-comforted perhaps by a flight from Toronto to Orlando prior to the last World Cup when a Dutch radio reporter suffered a mid-air panic-attack so bad the plane was forced to touch down at a military base en route.

With Holland playing in Turkey in April, the Dutch FA have asked Bergkamp to try and sort it out. Mind you, the team plane's landing in Cardiff on Thursday was so bumpy there was talk among the players when Bergkamp's car next speeds through the Channel for the game against Belgium in December, they could all be with him.

BARE-FACED CHEEK: A Romanian junior team, Athletic Bucharest, were trailing 16-0 last weekend when they were forced to flee the pitch two minutes from time. "Some gypsy fans vowed that Athletic would leave the stadium naked if they lost the game 16-0," reported the local paper. But then Athletic really got fleeced. The Romanian FA fined them £10,000. "We're sorry for Athletic but we had to apply the rules," said a spokesman.

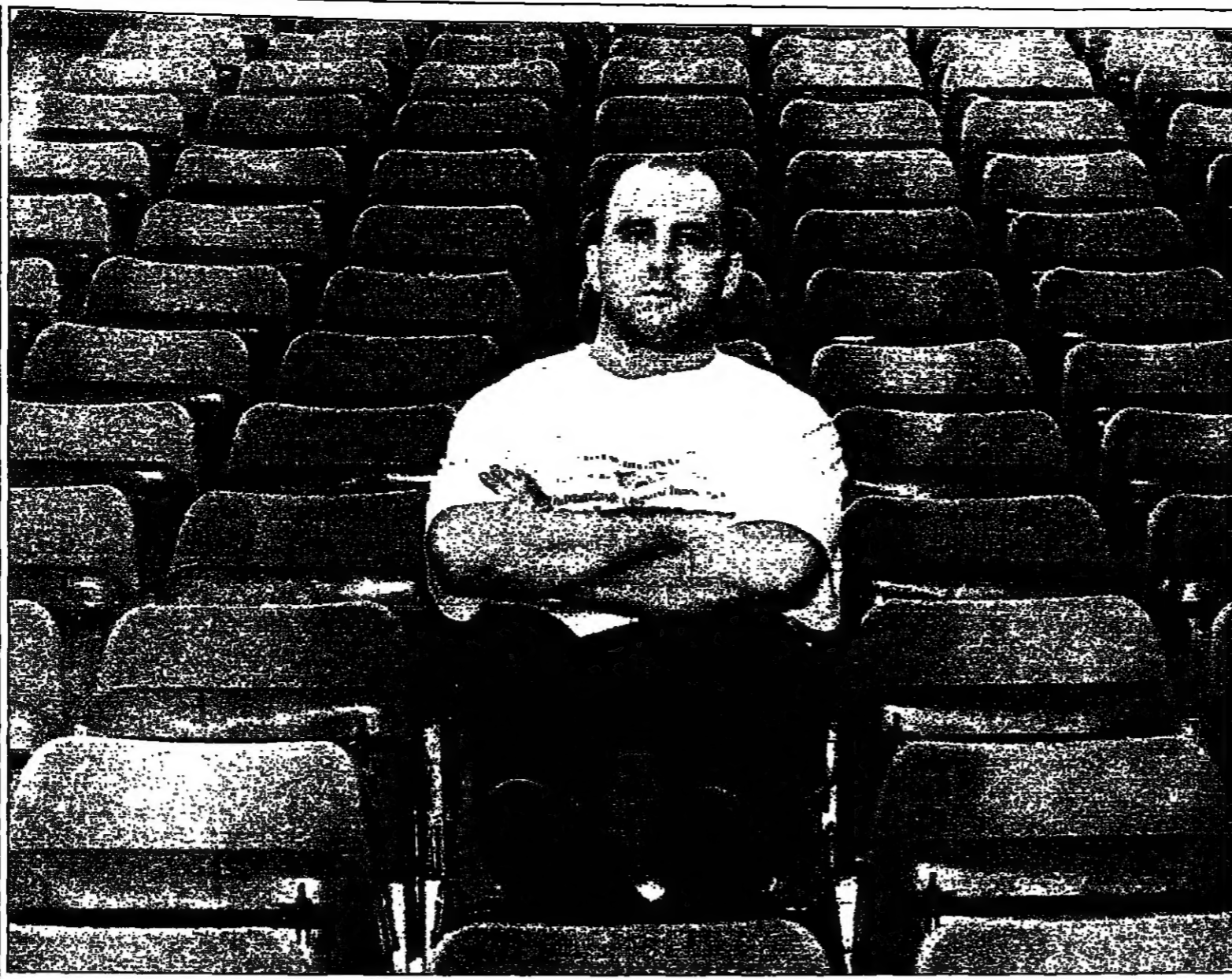
APPARENTLY, Brighton's chairman Bill Archer reckons Seagulls supporters' fears about the club's future are groundless.

FIVE-year-old Jonathan Levey got so carried away as Newcastle's mascot against Aston Villa that the start of the game was held up for five minutes. After deftly knocking balls past Pavel Srnicek in the kick-in, Jonathan duly headed off for the coin-tossing. But then, as everyone prepared for the kick-off, the referee noticed the mascot missing. There, being egged on by a roaring crowd, was little Jonathan dribbling it back upfield, through the whole Newcastle team (nothing changes) to have another pop at Pavel. In the end mum had to come on to coax him off.

LAST season they were known as the Light Horseman. Now the pub team from York are called the Anne Summers Foxes. The lingerie and sex-toy firm have sponsored them for £250 and given them a new, er, strip emblem with the company name. "Yes, we get a lot of ribald comments," says the team's assistant manager David Sear. "But who cares? We've won seven of the last eight games." A definite case of getting your kit on for the lads.

BOWLED over, Kenny Dalglish's new autobiography enjoyed a 100,000 print run, lavish launch and publicity, with the man himself paid £250,000. Stan Bowles's Stan the Man had a 6,000 print run, hardly any publicity, attracted one to the launch; but the story was overtaken by Ray Wilkins's departure from QPR, and when asked how many nights would need to be knocked off Dalglish's fee to match Stan's, his manager John Iona replied: "All of them." So how nice to see the Bowles book top of the Sportspages best-selling list last week.

CHANT of the Week: When Sheffield United went 2-0 up against Manchester City last weekend, the home fans launched into their ritual refrain of "We hate Wednesday, we hate Wednesday." To which the 7,000 travelling City fans instantly replied: "We hate Saturday, we hate Saturday." (heard by Kevin Whelan of London).



Eye contact... predator and craftsman Keith Wood takes a break from his relentless ambition to become the complete player. PHOTOGRAPH BY GARRY WEAVER

Wood sounds the charge

Robert Armstrong talks with the Irish international Keith Wood, the high-octane hooker of the Courage league leaders Harlequins

LOOK Keith Wood is straight in the eye and you meet the unblinking gaze of a predator. That look, poised and uncompromising, is precisely what front rows up and down the country have been getting in the last few weeks. The former Garryowen hooker burst upon the Courage league scene five weeks ago. Wood does not mess about on or off the pitch. Initial attempts to talk with him were courteously resisted because he was still feeling the ill-effects of a forearm battering by the Northampton pack. This six-foot, 15 stone 12 pound competitor invariably digs up the last iota of strength and adrenalin for club and country. As the Irish like to say, he is never backward about going forward.

What makes Wood different from other hookers is his relentless ambition to become the complete rugby player. Once the whistle goes he recognises no distinction between forwards and backs and accepts no indulgence from pacemen merely because he works at the coal face. In loose play he swoops and dives like a shark, plunging through bodies, laying off passes and scoring tries because that, for him, is rugby heaven.

According to Harlequins' director of rugby Dick Best, "Keith has injected a great deal of pace and power into a tight five that without him was going to hold its own without necessarily running the show." Best targeted Wood in 1994 after the then 23-year-old made a sensational Test debut against Australia. This summer Best flew to Dublin and made Irish Permanent plc's best-known customer adviser an offer he couldn't refuse. Another former international coach, Ireland's Gerry Murphy, said of Wood: "He has been our outstanding player and has the potential to be special. His total commitment came after Wood had helped Garryowen to a couple of All-Ireland League titles in 1992 and 1994 and before his Test career had been put on hold by a persistent shoulder injury that virtually wiped out the 1994-95 season. Last year's World Cup campaign also ended prematurely for him with the same injury.

Wood, though, takes the long view that earned his earlier Gordon 31 caps for Ireland and the Lions in a seven-year Test career, and he has every intention of winning back the green No. 2 shirt. "I've loved it since I came to Harlequins," he said. "Back home I'd been out of action with the injury for quite a while; I needed a fresh challenge and it seemed the right time to make a change. Harlequins is a very good club and I like their style of play, which suits what I have to offer."

A professional contract and clearly defined competitive goals are major assets to Wood, the type of natural talent that has often drifted into limbo in the inconsistent world of Irish club rugby. In the early Nineties he learned a great deal about the interactive role of forwards and backs from the New Zealanders Murray Kidd, who coached Garryowen before accepting the Ireland job. At the start of this year, however, the hooker appeared to be out of luck and perhaps out of favour. Now Best has assumed the club-management role previously undertaken by Dick at club level. "In the dressing room Keith acts as a genuine catalyst to team building," Best said. "I believe we haven't seen the best of Keith yet. He can do the running as well as the hard work in the tight five. He helps the back row by operating as an extra ball-carrier who gets across the gain line. And he gets a big charge out of scoring tries."

Rugby Union

International: Italy v Wales

Gibbs takes his place in history

David Plummer in Rome

SCOTT GIBBS makes history today when he becomes the first player to return from rugby league and play for his country in union. But to him it is just another game. "A lot of fuss has been made about it, but making history means nothing to me," says after being named in the Wales side that faces Italy today. "All I am concerned about is picking up my win bonus after the match and flying home on Sunday."

Wales have made nine changes to the open side and from a side which lost to France last week. Injuries reduced the options of the coach Kevin Bowring who wanted to experiment at half-back but he has dropped the former Wales captain and flanker Martyn Williams. Gareth Thomas moves from the wing to partner Gibbs in midfield, reward for his impressive form in the centre this season with Bridgend, while Ebbw Vale's Kingsley Jones moves to the open side and is regarded by Bowring as his key man to date. "Italy like to kill the ball. While Martyn has done well in his two games for us, Kingsley has more experience and greater physical presence," said Bowring. "It is not merely a case of getting to the breakdown first but of ensuring that the ball is kept alive."

Italy are beginning what they regard as the most important season in their history. They play all the Five Nations in the next three months as well as Australia and have set a target of winning at least three of them. "With all due respect, that means we have to beat Wales, Ireland and Scotland," said the Italy captain Massimo Cutilina. "We have to get out to a winning start because it would make people take notice of us. We want to be included in the home championship and that will only happen if we show we are worth a place."

Wales have played Italy on three occasions, all in Cardiff, and their winning margin has come down from 31 points in 1982 to 10 in 1994 and five last January. Italy staged a late rally then after being 31-6 down in the second half but the match was marred by a diplomatic row in the a match dinner when a jocular remark by the Welsh Rugby Union president Sir Tasker Watkins was lost in translation and Cutilina threatened to lead his players out. Cutilina will rekindle the passions which erupted that night. "They will be on fire and we have to put it out," said the Wales captain Jonathan Humphrey. "Come on the days when you could take victory for granted against a side like Italy. We have to impose our game on them and sort out the weaknesses which have bled our performance." Italy's coach Georges Coste has urged his team to play like lions even if the match is not being staged in the Colosseum. He said Wales would have the advantage of better preparation but Italy's Jonny Wilkinson, No. 10 Julian Gardner said the Italians had organised a number of training camps. "They will be ready for Wales and it is a game Italy can win," he said. "I saw Wales in Australia during the summer and they were impressive. The Wallabies had not got their game together but Wales never threatened to take advantage. If Italy are to break into the Five Nations Championship, they have to start winning games like this one."

Wales have played Italy on

Sale withdraw All Black Mitchell

SALE last night averted a possible confrontation with the Department of Education and Employment by not playing his usual director of rugby John Mitchell in today's League One game at Northampton, writes David Ivin. Sale originally named the 32-year-old New Zealand back-row forward in their line-up. Mitchell has a post-graduate diploma in coaching but in order to fulfil the criteria as a player, he must be a full international, and have played for his country within the last 18 months. Mitchell's place is taken by Dave Erskine. Simon Verbeek replaces Chris Yates on the left-wing with Paul Smith back at prop after injury. John Devereux, Dewi Morris and Tom Beal are still unfit.

Equitrianism

JAMES FISHER, twice runner-up on the previous day, had a well deserved change of fortune yesterday when he won the SCB Scaffolding Twin Towers Trophy on Renville at the Horse of the Year Show. Renville, a Dutch-bred eight-year-old, and the Berkshire rider, in only his second international season, were more than two seconds ahead of England's Philip Le Jeune on Bodguard. Michael Whitaker and Magic Carpet, the winner of a novice championship here in 1994, was one of several defeated by the final upright. But earlier Whitaker had opened his account for the week when taking the Danco Exhibition Cup on Eiton. He had the fastest in nine clear rounds and was followed home by Guy Good on Carat and Nigel Coupe on Banbury Cross. Whitaker was the only one of Britain's four Olympic Games riders not commencing between horse shows here and in Bremen, Germany this weekend.

Third time lucky for fast fisher

JOHN KERR at Wembley

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Weekend fixtures

Table of weekend fixtures for various football leagues including Nationwide League, Second Division, and Third Division.

SCOTTISH LEAGUE

Table of Scottish League fixtures including First Division, Second Division, and Third Division.

OMI VAUXHALL CONFERENCE

Table of OMI Vauxhall Conference fixtures including First Division, Second Division, and Third Division.

Rugby League

Table of Rugby League fixtures including Super League and Championship.

Results

Table of sports results including Soccer, Basketball, Hockey, and Baseball.

Soccer

Table of soccer results from various leagues.

Baseball

Table of baseball results from various leagues.

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Top of the tour
Montgomerie poised to clinch No 1 spot
21



The hardest of Quins
Life at the top with Keith Wood
23

HODDLE'S MEN TAKE THEIR PARTNERS AT BISHAM ABBEY



Holding the line... England's players keep in step during yesterday's training session at Bisham Abbey; Glenn Hoddle's team play Poland in a World Cup qualifier at Wembley next Wednesday. The coach later said that there may be a future international role for Matthew Le Tissier. David Lacey reports, page 22

Robo-refs, discretion not assured



David Lacey

It is just as well that there are no Premiership matches this weekend. The queue of managers and players outside the headmaster's study at Lancaster Gate is already threatening to spill into Bayswater Road. When the schoolmasterly Stanley Rous was secretary of the Football Association a wigging from the head was exactly what offenders received. But those were the days before yellow cards, red cards and David Elleray, football's Mr Quelch: days when referees were left to apply the laws of the game as they felt fit. Now we have Paul Dawson, the Leicester referee who may be a newcomer but, like the poor, has always seemed to be with us. When news came through last Saturday that early baths were being taken at Highbury on a rota basis and that the Sunderland manager Peter Reid had been dismissed from the dug-out, one name sprang to mind: Dawson! Mr Dawson may be an honest referee. His problem is the number of times when he is honestly wrong. This season alone he has ignored one deliberate handball, by Petrescu, which led to Chelsea scoring against Coventry, and then dismissed Stewart for a handball offence that may arguably have been prompted by Bould's shove in the back. Dare to be a Dawson, dare to stand alone. The man does not lack courage. But he does need to be taken in hand. Will any of this be mentioned tomorrow when the Premier League referees hold one of their regular seminars? Unfortunately they will not be addressed by the Sheffield Wednesday manager David Pleat as planned; his use of quiet irony to let everybody know his feelings about the dismissal of Des Walker at Highbury touched a sharp contrast to Reid's touchline ravings 12 days later.

Some sort of understanding may be reached amid the calm of a Midlands hotel on a Sunday afternoon. But when the Premiership resumes and passions burn anew, more players will get their cards, more benches will screech, and the FA will be putting more managers on a freezer. If last season is anything to go by, the dust will settle. Nobody in authority admitted as much but the feeling was that after Christmas the more card-happy referees were urged to restrain themselves by this reckoning we still have to suffer another three months of the robo-refs before they are reprogrammed to act with a modicum of the discretion that Fifa is trying to eliminate. If only some of them would think twice about the first booking, they would not make themselves hostages to fortune with the second. Why on earth is sensible Keith Cooper, who retired as a referee last season, not a Premier League assessor? Yet, even in less hysterical times there was always the official who attracted trouble in spite of himself. One such was Gilbert Pullen of Bristol. On Easter Saturday in 1990 Tottenham were going for the championship and needed to beat Manchester City at White Hart Lane. At the end of a goalless first half Spurs were awarded a penalty by Pullen, who correctly added time for it to be taken. Be that as it may, Cliff Jones's kick and blocked the Welsh winger put the rebound into the net the referee, again correctly, ruled that the half had ended with the save. Spurs lost, and eventually missed the title. AS THE crowd went ballistic the Tottenham captain Danny Blanchflower put his hands on Pullen's shoulders and prevented him leaving the field until he had explained his decision. There were no comebacks from Pullen or the FA, but imagine the consequences now. Sometimes, as television goes eye from all camera angles and newspaper headlines howl, the modern game appears to be in need of nothing so much as a sedative. In the meantime players would be wise not to manhandle Mr Dawson, the last three digits of whose telephone number are 007. Licensed to thrill.

Andy Wilson in Nadi on the Lions' rapid plans for a Test against Australia after appeal court overturns ban on Super League

League victory for Murdoch

THE stunning verdict yesterday by an Australian appeal court to allow Rupert Murdoch's Super League to operate freely in Australia will have worldwide repercussions for rugby league, not least in Europe where the inaugural summer season failed to live up to its hype. One immediate consequence of the verdict is that Great Britain will play at least one Test match in Australia on their current South Seas tour. Maurice Lindsay, the Rugby Football League chief executive and International Board

chairman, said it was a victory "not only for Super League Australia but for all the other Super League-aligned countries. The pressures that European Super League has had to work under have now all been lifted. "There are now no obstacles and we can go ahead with an exciting international calendar of events, which will include a World Club Championship, tours by all the respective national teams and of course the World Cup." The game or games between Australia and the Lions will be as much an assertion of Super League's

presence in the country as a sure-fire money-spinner. At least one match will definitely take place, the Lions coach Phil Larder said yesterday, but no date or venue has been decided. Australian Tests could replace one or more of the three Tests scheduled for New Zealand in the next few weeks, or be tagged on to the end of the tour. The Australian Federal Court of Appeal's decision set aside all 60 orders made against the rebel competition this year after the Australian Rugby League acted to block Murdoch's move into the game. The key decision taken by the court yesterday was that loyalty agreements signed with the ARL by all 20 Optus Cup clubs, including the eight who subsequently signed with Super League, were illegal. The ARL is contemplating an appeal at the High Court against the appeal verdict but Super League is at the moment free to launch in Australia as well as Europe next summer, reviving the prospect of a World Club Challenge at the end of the season between each competition's leading clubs, and also of trans-hemisphere matches during the season under similar arrangements to those of Murdoch's Super 12 rugby union series. A further defeat for Murdoch yesterday, which would almost certainly have seen him pull out of rugby league in Australia and concentrate on rugby union, would have left the game in the northern hemisphere staring into the abyss. The inaugural summer ses-

son did not end on the high note of world club play-offs but with a worrying drain of players to rugby union, and hit a new low with the decision to reject an application to launch a club in South Wales. Now the northern hemisphere clubs will feel there are grounds for optimism again. Gary Hetherington, one of Larder's assistant

tour is due to end. But Larder, anxious to prevent his players being distracted from today's Test against Fiji in Nadi, said: "Everybody on this tour has gained financially from Super League and we have a responsibility to Super League, so even if it is inconvenient it has to be done." Compromise between the warring factions remains the ideal outcome for the long-term good of the game but it remains a distant prospect, and now it is the ARL which looks the more vulnerable of the two organisations.

There is a franchise waiting for them in 1998. He added: "All the hassle and problems we have had might even work in our favour. The legal defeats have made Mr Murdoch personally involved; I can't see how anyone else other than his organisation would have had the financial ability to make it as far as this appeal." Murdoch's statement, issued after the verdict, added weight to that view. "[We] have never lost faith in our belief in what rugby league could and should be a truly international sport deserving unsurpassed marketing and promotional excellence." Instead it is the ARL which now has major problems. It was bankrolled by Optus - the Australian pay-television network backed by Kerry Facher in opposition to Murdoch's FoxTel - in the outrageously expensive battle to sign up Australia's top players but only in the form of loans which could be called in at any time. Though 12 of the 20 Optus Cup clubs remained loyal, some of them, notably the Brisbane-based South Queensland Crushers and the Newcastle Knights, have serious financial difficulties. The ARL is now internationally isolated, which is why Lindsay and his fellow Super League officials are so keen to arrange an Ashes international in Australia at short notice. The British squad would prefer to change their present itinerary than extend the tour, as many of them have booked holidays for the first week in November when the

The pressures that European Super League has had to work under have all been lifted

coaches who is also the chairman of Sheffield Eagles and a leading light in the recently formed association of Super League clubs, Rugby League Europe Limited, was eager to seize the moment. "The initial announcement of Super League was the most important day in the history of the game," he said. "This is even bigger. "It has been a rocky 12 months for us but now it is up to Rugby League Europe to take the game forward. What has happened with the South Wales business has been dreadful, and the RFL must take the blame. Rugby League Europe is the most progressive body I have been involved with and I think we should tell South Wales now

Guardian COLLINS Crossword 20,776

A copy of the Collins English Dictionary will be sent to the first five correct entries drawn. Entries to Guardian Crossword No 20,776, P.O. Box 315, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 2AX, by first post on Friday. Solution and winners in the Guardian on Monday October 14.

Collins English Dictionary crossword puzzle grid with clues and solutions.

Advertisement for Beck's beer featuring a key logo and the text 'BEST SELLING PREMIUM CASK ALE SINCE 1777'.

Advertisement for Blue Rinse hair product featuring a quote from Jason Donovan: "Blue rinse... a massive blue rinse set," says Donovan. "Joseph was blue rinse actually. It's all a bit blue rinse. My life's blue rinse."

Vertical text on the right edge of the page, including "Monday October 7", "Managing of British", "The", "Doubts ov", "Downe", "Two killed", "Nordic bi", "Inside".